

# AN INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC PHILOSOPHY

*By the same Author*

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THE LEARNED KNIFE  
THE PROSPECTS OF HUMANISM  
ISIS AND OSIRIS  
THE NAMELESS FAITH  
SPIRIT AND SOCIETY  
I WHO AM

LAWRENCE HYDE

# AN INTRODUCTION TO ORGANIC PHILOSOPHY

*An Essay on the Reconciliation  
of the Masculine and the  
Feminine Principles*



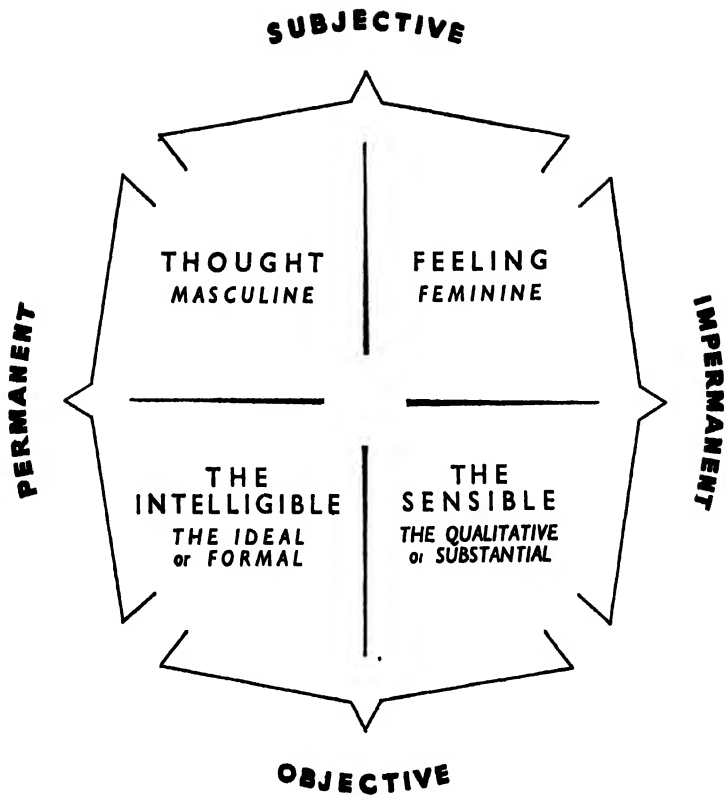
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# **BASIC METAPHYSICS**

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## PREFACE

THE CHARACTER of the present work has been determined by two basic convictions, arrived at after many years of study and reflection.

Firstly, the only hope of reaching a solution of the agonizing ethical and intellectual problems by which our present age is distracted lies in accepting the necessity for a *return to simplicity*. I mean by this that our experts in the fields of science, psychology, philosophy and theology will have sooner or later to face the fact that the analysis and critical comparison of the host of theories and speculations which invite our attention in all these departments of thought cannot by itself lead to any conclusive results. Such investigation, although necessary enough from one point of view, must be subordinated to a deeper and more creative activity which is essentially spiritual in character—a conscientious attempt to understand certain fundamental truths about man and his relation to the universe which cannot be apprehended by intellectual effort alone.

Secondly, sincere thinking along these lines will lead the enquirer in time to perceive that illumination in this realm comes to us only when masculine thought and feminine feeling are brought equally into play in the process of apprehending truth. In other words, our modern culture has been dominated to a disastrous degree by masculine intellectualism, and the time has come to redress the balance—without, however, yielding to the temptation to swing over to the opposite extreme.

This study represents an attempt to re-evaluate experience on the foundation of the two fundamental principles set forth above. And I cannot but regard it as significant that it is the work of a writer who has no academic qualifications in philosophy (and has, of course, in one direction paid a price for the fact). For it should be evident that the philosophical instruction that is imparted today in our universities could scarcely be less propitious for cultivating the particular state of mind which is essential for developing the capacity for organic thinking. That search for wisdom which is the traditional pursuit of the philosopher has given place to the minute investigation of technical problems, and the student is provided as a result

with little that is of real help to him in adjusting himself to the basic realities of existence.

Finally, I should not venture to publish this book were I not persuaded that it is a particular expression of a way of thinking which is destined to acquire increasing cultural importance as the years go on. That is to say, I believe that as our realization of the limitations of the intellectualistic approach to knowledge continues to deepen we shall witness the appearance of an increasing number of works of the same tendency. In spite of its limitations the present pioneer effort may, therefore, prove to be justified. Time alone will show.

LAWRENCE HYDE





CHAPTER I

FROM SEPARATION TO UNITY

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I. *Man's Sense of the Whole*

WE ARE LIVING in an age in which the forces at work amongst us that are making for division, uncertainty and confusion are menacingly powerful. But at the same time a relatively small, but important, minority are seeking in many different fields to check this destructive process and create unity out of chaos.

In so doing they are giving expression to an impulse which has deep, and one must venture to say, mystical,<sup>1\*</sup> roots. For there is something within the being of each of us which makes us yearn for harmony, peace and completion. This need to unify the disconnected and seemingly unreconcilable is basic, and the fact that the idealists amongst us have an almost insurmountable tendency to seek this consummation by resorting to every kind of escapism, however absurd, does not undermine the validity of the fundamental insight that is entailed. Pluralistic systems of philosophy notwithstanding, nothing can do away with the fact that man has a deeply implanted sense of the organic, and that the preservation of our civilization depends directly upon how far he can succeed in giving it positive expression.

Nor are there wanting indications that our sensitiveness to this factor is in many directions becoming more manifest. Men of science are showing a marked interest in developing categories of thought that would enable them to include the highly technical findings of various specialists in one common realm, while again it is of no little significance that the first stage in the humanization of scientific thinking has already been accomplished with the recognition that in order to deal with certain problems in physics the observer must be introduced into the equation. Moreover, there are

\* For Notes see end of volume.

scientists who are looking still further afield and realizing that the problems presented to us in the realm of physical research ought to be properly faced, and that their own approach to knowledge should somehow be synthesized with that of thinkers who are primarily concerned, not with facts, but with values.

At the same time an increasing number of artists and students of religion are coming to perceive that from their end also a bridge must be built between the subjective and the objective fields of knowledge. They realize the urgent need for a new way of thinking that will on the one hand acknowledge the significance of our experiences in the realm of the aesthetic and mystical, and on the other do proper justice both to the searching problems with which we have to struggle in the field of social relations and to the astonishing discoveries that are today being made by scientists regarding the nature of the world in which we are living.

Again, intelligent philosophers are realizing that their deeper problems can only be solved by a synthesis of idealism and realism, and that this means that the organic element in our experience should be given increasing attention.

In psychological theory the abstract and dualistic conception of mind and body is being rapidly abandoned in favour of the far richer possibilities offered us by psycho-somatics,<sup>2</sup> while at the same time experience gained in the field of psychotherapy has made it abundantly clear that our modern masculine concern with scientific thinking must be balanced by a proper recognition of the claims of the feminine side of our nature.

What it comes to, in fact, is that we are unmistakably moving in these and associated fields towards the integration of aspects of experience<sup>3</sup> that have become disastrously separated from one another. And apart from such developments in the cultural realm we have to consider the agonizing problems confronting us all individually in the domain of our personal lives. We realize that we cannot hope to attain to interior calm and stability until we have succeeded in integrating the conflicting forces at work within the depths of our being. And if we have any understanding of spiritual realities we see also that even the most intelligent and capable psychotherapist can only help us to carry this process of unification to a certain stage.

## 2. *Psychology and Cosmology*

There is no question, of course, of failing to appreciate the valuable work that is being performed by psychotherapists all over the world in aiding the typical neurotic personality of today to synthesize the conflicting forces in his being. But although up to a point their contributions in this field are of serious value and merit our sincere respect, it is also true that they are disappointing, and this for two outstanding reasons.

In the first place, the psychologist's conception of integration is indisputably limited. As a physician, his efforts are for the most part confined to removing the tensions and inhibitions in the patient to the point that he becomes capable of resuming his life as a more or less normal member of a far from normal society. But valuable as this service is, it takes the person concerned only a certain distance along the road. The principle should be recognized that, for certain people at least, such restoration should be only a preparation for achieving a much more complete order of synthesis through the proper employment of some form of yoga, or mental science. Although, as will be seen later, the discussion of techniques does not fall within the plan of this essay, it is with this more advanced aspect of integration that it is concerned. For its theme is that the key to spiritual liberation lies in the reconciliation of the mental and the emotional<sup>4</sup> elements in man's being, but on a higher level of consciousness than that to which the ordinary psychologist gives his attention.

The second objection to the accepted conception of integration has deeper implications. The basic weakness of most thinking in this field is the absence of any satisfying philosophical system or framework in relation to which the mass of data that is accumulating can be evaluated. To put it simply, our psychologists have no metaphysics, and are therefore, in spite of the brilliance of many of their theories, fundamentally at sea. They are engaged in the hopeless enterprise of trying to interpret the processes of the psyche from within the realm of the psyche itself. Hence the all too evident contradictions and inconsistencies by which their thinking is impaired.

Now a metaphysic which has any value will necessarily accom-

moderate the subjective and the objective aspects of being within a single unifying scheme. (For example, it will provide both for self-consciousness and extension in space.) It will imply a recognition of the fact that Man and Cosmos are two complementary aspects of one basic reality—which, it may be added, is not by any means the same thing as considering the cosmic only so far as it has psychological significance for the individual, which is the tendency, for instance, of most of the followers of Jung.

This will explain the character of the Diagram which appears as the frontispiece of the present work. The reader will perceive even after the most casual inspection that it differs from the familiar charts of the stratification of the psyche through the fact that it includes in one figure the basic elements in the structure both of the self and of the external world with which it stands in relation. It follows that the essay here devoted to expounding its significance ranks both as a philosophical and a psychological treatise, and is in fact a study in cosmology.

The essential point involved is this. Although our modern psychologists have gained a considerable understanding of the problems of subjective integration, the picture that they give us of the situation is seriously defective, since they have so far made scarcely any attempts to explore the relation of interior psychic forces to the natural forces observable in the external world. Or to put it differently, they have not yet sufficiently realized that psychological structures are correlative with structures existing in the objective realm which should properly be considered in close conjunction with them, as the explanatory diagram seeks to make clear.<sup>5</sup>

All sorts of difficulties and misconceptions result. But I am not concerned in this work to examine them directly. My purpose, rather, is to indicate the possibilities that are inherent in the alternative approach to reality of which I have given a preliminary account. The view I would advance is that when the problem is treated on this or similar lines the way is clear to a reconciliation of three basic elements in our modern experience that are at present dangerously out of relation with one another: science, art and religion.

Again, if our thinking is to be really organic we must take proper account in formulating our scheme of all the aspects of knowledge that are accessible to a developed human being. The aim must be to

co-ordinate and illuminate the experiences of *the whole man*. And this means that the testimonies of scientists, philosophers, men of action, artists, mystics and saints must all be equally respected, however challenging this may be to certain minds. In particular, we must acknowledge the claims upon us of the higher aspects of religion. And in the present essay they have been fully respected. Their vindication is, in fact, of fundamental significance for my thesis, since, as will appear later, I am proceeding on the assumption that the relation between the different elements in our knowledge can be rendered fully intelligible only if we refer them to an Absolute<sup>6</sup> in which they can all be seen to be included. Moreover, I do not hesitate to advance the view that indifference or hostility to religion in its emancipated presentations is a decisive indication of a failure to think in a truly organic fashion.

### 3. *The Place of Philosophy*

I must now say something regarding the way in which the problem of integration is dealt with in the pages that follow.

As the masters of the spiritual life have always taught, the basic key to creative living is absolutely simple. Cultivate inner peace, enter into subjective communion with the transcendental Source of your being, come into at-one-ment with the Father (it matters little in what language the process is described) and your problem will be fundamentally solved.

But this is not the end of the matter. For man finds himself related outwardly to a vast, challenging and complex universe, and this is the corresponding cosmic factor with which he has to reckon. It becomes evident, therefore, that that interior peace and freedom which is the fruit of successful contemplation must be thought of as the essential condition for dealing effectively with the infinity of problems, absorbing, oppressive, bewildering, agonizing as the case may be, that are presented to us by the objective realm of existence, and by struggling with which we develop the positive side of our natures. Further, it should be plain that it is confusing the issues seriously to conclude that the cultivation of basic mystical simplicity is in any way a *substitute* for coming to terms with the task imposed upon us all of gaining as complete an understanding as possible of

the great Scheme of Things within which we are all called upon to live.

In other words, the type of mystic who pathetically, yet excusably, enquires, 'Must it all be so elaborate and complicated?' has failed to realize that the basic simplicity which lies at the Centre is the complementary principle of the fascinating intricacy that is characteristic of the Periphery, and that the destiny of man is to attune his mind in an equal measure to both these aspects of reality.

However important, therefore, the place of mysticism in the system of things, we are committed to an exploration of the fields of science and philosophy. And in respect to the second a further problem arises. For any concern with general principles is interpreted by the typical modern intellectual as just another device for evading the exacting demands of the existential situation. In his mind philosophizing and escapism are associated with one another to a suspicious degree. Our confidence in a thinker diminishes to the degree that he moves away from the realm of the concrete into that of abstractions. It is the empiricist always who has the last word. And so on.

I will not pause here to undertake a defence of the philosophical approach to knowledge, but suggest only that every serious person feels the need for some sort of general framework to which he can refer his experiences. Otherwise he not only leaves one side of his mind undeveloped, but becomes the prey to a deep sense of insecurity.

Moreover, in spite of the assumption made by contemporary logical positivists that philosophical thinking should be limited to the elaborate analysis of meanings, and that until this preliminary work has been completed all statements in this field are premature and for the most part nonsensical, I hold to the belief that a valid and defensible system of general ideas that really helps to illuminate our experience can be provided for the sincere seeker after wisdom. In other words, I am convinced that certain valuable and basic insights can be brought into relief and the relations between them made plain, and that no activity in the way of minutely scrutinizing philosophical formulations will fundamentally undermine the significance of this radical system of concepts.

As to the scheme that it is my purpose to unfold in these pages, what it fundamentally involves is the consideration of man's relation

to the permanent and the impermanent elements in his experience. But, as remarked earlier, my approach to the problem is cosmological rather than exclusively psychological. For the whole point of the thesis that I am concerned to advance is that that process of integration which we are all attempting to achieve is accomplished both in subjective and objective terms. In other words, the progressive unification of the mental and emotional elements in our being involves as it proceeds the establishing of a new relation to corresponding elements in the external world—the formal and the qualitative features of objects.

A few words regarding certain aspects of the problem that I am *not* discussing in the present work. First of all, I shall have nothing to say regarding what may be described as the invisible structure of the manifested universe. We live in a world in which events appear to us to succeed one another in time. But is it perhaps really the case that reality consists of a timeless four-dimensional continuum, and that the only movement involved is that of our minds as they traverse this static system by following their individual paths through it? Speculations of this order are of deep interest, and it is of course essential that we should try to gain some kind of picture of what is entailed. But such problems, fascinating as they are, will not be investigated in this particular essay.

Again, I shall have little to say in these pages regarding various religious and psychological disciplines that are propitious to fostering the expansion of consciousness to which I have referred above. Although they are of course of fundamental importance, a discussion of them would be out of place in the present work, and in any case increase its length to an inordinate degree.

Further, we shall not here be occupied *directly* with deep mystical and metaphysical experiences of the type that are accorded on occasion to the illumines amongst us. My purpose, rather, is to consider the way in which man's awakened inner consciousness finds expression in transforming his conception of his own being and of the objective realm with which he finds himself in immediate association. But at the same time I must insist that the discussion leads us finally to the threshold of a state of awareness in which the mystical unity of all being is actually experienced by the liberated soul.

Finally, it is not part of the plan of this work to consider in any detail the applications and outworkings of the principles that are discussed, although I conclude my survey with some brief indications of the possibilities that are afforded us in this direction. Such explorations belong to a later volume—or rather, they must be conducted in practical terms by any who find the ideas here set forth to have a suggestive value.

#### *4. Method of Approach*

Now a few words regarding presentation. Except in certain cases that are indicated, I am using philosophical terms in their accepted sense. I do this, however, with a due recognition of the fact that modern investigations in the fields of nuclear physics, communication theory, animal ethology, psychotherapy and paranormal psychology may lead in course of time to a considerable modification of our present conception of the workings of the human mind. But it is still much too early to arrive at any clear picture of what all these exciting researches will lead to as the years go on. And still more important, it is plain that men of science, with their highly specialized approach to these problems, can make only a limited contribution to our understanding of man's nature, the character of which is essentially spiritual.

In any case, in the present work I am making use of scientific and philosophical terms only to a very limited extent. For it is implied in the type of philosophy that I am attempting to expound that the ideas which are put forward shall be expressed in as simple language as possible. Any undue elaboration of technical terminology, apart from the necessities imposed by work in specialized fields, must be taken as evidence of failure to respect the basic principles of organic thinking—that equal significance shall be accorded to the intellectual and the emotional components in our experience. But the simplicity entailed must not be confused with mere simplification. As far as the present essay goes, the reader will discover that it will make serious demands upon his attention—just because the approach to truth is by a middle path which he is likely to find unfamiliar, and very likely perplexing.

For the scheme that I am sketching out in these pages has a very



special character as compared with those usually met with in this domain of thought. To put it simply, its nature is such that it must be 'felt' as much as 'thought'. It is experiential rather than academic, and such that it cannot be mastered by intellectual effort alone. It speaks as decisively to the 'heart' as to the 'head'. And its appeal is as much to those who are sensitive to the artistic and 'feminine' side of experience as to the typically 'masculine' thinker with his insistence upon logic, detachment and rigorous systematization. Again, the figures, symbols and images to which one must have recourse in order to develop its principles belong as much to the realm of poetry as to that of science.

I have deliberately abstained from making any attempt, except by way of passing allusion and a few notes at the end of the book, to bring what is here set forth into relation with historical and contemporary thought by the introduction of scholarly references and comparisons. For this procedure I have a very definite reason. There is a mass of literature available in this field for students of psychology, symbology and metaphysics. But it is liable to be extremely bewildering, even for the educated, and thus constitutes an invitation to that critical and intelligent, but also relativistic and inconclusive, type of thinking of the limitations of which we are today becoming increasingly conscious. There are serious grounds, therefore, for considering the possibilities of a more basic approach to problems of this type, the mark of which is that the attention is concentrated upon absolute essentials, and the resulting implications worked out as consistently as possible. The method is somewhat similar to what is known in religious literature as sustaining oneself on 'dry bread'. In other words, a search for truth is attempted which entails only a small measure of that intellectual gratification and stimulation to which the sophisticated are accustomed, and for which they pay such a serious price. But at the same time this type of approach brings its own rewards.

It is also in accordance with the spirit of my undertaking that I shall do little in the way of anticipating criticisms and safeguarding myself from misinterpretations by recourse to elaborate explanations and definitions. My trust is in the capacity of the sympathetic reader to understand the meanings that I am attempting to convey.

With respect to terminology, the philosophy that I am seeking to

expound is based on the assumption that reality is essentially spiritual in character. The activity of Spirit is experienced by man as a harmonizing influence, turning his mind and heart constantly towards everything that makes for comprehensiveness, harmony and unification. This notion belongs, however, to the sphere of religion, and is in any case too general to be of much aid to us in the fields of science and philosophy. What is called for, therefore, is a presentation of what may be described as the anatomy of spiritual manifestation, as it is disclosed both in the subjective and the objective realms of experience.

In dealing with the problem I make use of the classical distinction that we have inherited from Plato between the Intelligible and the Sensible aspects of existence. The first is the realm of the formal, or the ideal (understood, of course, in the philosophical sense as that which is related to *ideas*), the second that of sensory experience. What is presented to our senses can also be described as the material, while again since matter provides the foundation for what we experience as the qualities of objects, the sensory may be equated with the qualitative. Further, the sensible, material or qualitative can also be characterized as the substantial, since it is the mark of material objects that, unlike immaterial ideas, they possess (physical) substance. But since the concept of 'substance' (to be discussed briefly later) is regarded critically by many modern philosophers, this designation has to be employed with care.

In treating of the Sensible I shall use, as the occasion demands, any of the terms listed above, and I must make it clear at the outset that the scheme that I am here following does not permit me to describe the formal as having a qualitative character. Whatever the usage followed by certain writers, the realm of qualities is here conceived of as that of which we become aware only as the result of our association with matter.<sup>7</sup> The formal, on the contrary, is always immaterial in nature, and although it can be discerned *within* the field of physical existence, it can be contemplated also on the intellectual plane in independence of it.

Apart from these terms, there are certain expressions—including some employed in the present chapter—which are peculiarly liable to be misunderstood, and I have therefore indicated in the Notes at the end of the book the meaning which I assign to them.

As to the scheme of the work, our investigation begins with a consideration of the nature of the self, and its expression in the external world in the dual modes of thought and feeling. These powers of the soul<sup>8</sup> are then closely examined and the relation between them discussed. This leads to the conclusion that reality is disclosed to us decisively only when they have been subjectively synthesized, the outcome being a unified order of vision in which the formal and the qualitative features of objects receive full and equal acknowledgment.

The enquiry is then carried to a further stage. For analysis shows that the distinctive mark of such integrated response to experience is an increasing sensitiveness to organic wholes. The character of such wholes is examined with some care and the fact emerges that both their internal constitution and the relation in which they stand to one another is determined by the fundamentally important principle of the Many in the One. But even this is not the end of the matter, since an attempt is then made to show that this concept itself can be resolved into that of hierarchical structure.

As remarked earlier, the book concludes with a few preliminary indications of the ways in which the principles it develops can be creatively applied in different fields of experience.

## CHAPTER II

# SELF, MATTER AND FREEDOM

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### 1. *The Self and Its World*

OUR ENQUIRY NATURALLY begins with the self. What it is in its essence we can only very imperfectly understand, and then only as the outcome of deep philosophical meditation and mystical experience. But it is certainly clear that if we consider its more inward nature we find ourselves obliged to think of it as participating in some way in the life and being of a greater Self, the wisdom and love of which it expresses. And since all selves stand in the same relation to this Self, it follows that in the more interior realms of being they must be intimately associated with one another. For every true mystic recognizes that all separation is illusory. Truths of this order cannot, of course, be 'proved'; but if certain conditions are conformed to they can become, for some at least, a matter of experience.

We must now consider the link between the self and its world. It should be evident that it is indis severable. I can only know myself and express my nature in relation to a not-self which in one aspect or another is ever present for me, the correlative manifestation of my subjective being. I cannot know myself as a centre of consciousness without by the same act recognizing the existence of an outer world which is the complement to my self. I cannot affirm that 'I am' without thereby acknowledging that I am located at some point in an external realm, and this at some particular time. To be is to be incarnated. The Cartesian *cogito, ergo sum* does not solve our problem. Pure subjectivity is a mythical and an unattainable state.

At the same time, however, it is possible to transcend in a measure this relation to the not-self, not by retreating into an unreal solipsism, but by raising it to a higher plane. The individual then enters into a condition in which he knows himself and that which appears

as not himself as being in an essential sense one. Otherness is overcome, and the soul attains to a state of spiritual emancipation in which it finds itself poised between subjective and objective, being in a strange fashion both inside and outside itself, and enjoying great peace and freedom as a result.

Now to bring our theme more into the realm of the familiar and the comprehensible. We have to regard the self as having very extensive powers which may, for all we know, be infinite. In considering all questions of this nature we must, of course, if we wish to gain any real light upon them, take account of what we think and feel in our more ecstatic and liberated moments. On such occasions we are filled with the conviction that we have almost unfathomable possibilities locked up within us, and that we are potentially attuned to every form of manifested life. At the same time, if we have any sense of realities we also recognize that such are our limitations that only in the course of an almost sidereal evolution could we bring the manifestation of these latent powers to perfection. But this does not affect the validity of this primary insight.

Again, if we are not neurotic, we all have a deep and irresistible impulse to express our nature in some way or another in the outer world. This urge may find an outlet on all sorts of levels, but it is always there, and is in fact our guarantee that we are fully alive. Inertia, passivity, mere existence is not appropriate to an awakened human being. There is that within us which in the proper course of things should and must find positive expression without. Moreover, the range of this manifestation ought stage by stage to become ever more comprehensive as the consciousness unfolds. While finally, it is apparent, at least to the reflective, that the world is so constituted spiritually that if such self-expression is achieved on a sufficiently high level, each individual self, or monad, can manifest its distinctive nature without thereby injuring any other, or limiting its freedom.

Even if (to the possible relief of the reader) we descend to a more mundane level and look at the question from the standpoint of the democratic educator, we find that it is an absolutely basic principle that the child should be encouraged from the beginning to give expression to his distinctive nature, to discover and manifest outwardly the creative powers that he possesses as a unique individual.

To the imaginative nothing is more detestable than the spectacle of a collection of conditioned, suggestible, standardized men and women who are too colourless and indoctrinated to rank as true personalities. Hence for all concerned the basic injunction is: be yourself—but for Heaven's sake in such a way as to cause the least possible embarrassment to others who are seeking to realize the same ideal! Or to carry it somewhat further: you will find that your deeper self, if you can only liberate it, does actually express itself in such dynamic, yet innocuous, terms. Which coincides with the conclusion reached on more mystical grounds in the paragraph above.

What, however, does this expression involve psychologically? From the standpoint of the philosophy we are about to explore, the answer is: the manifestation, in ever more complete balance, of the correlated powers of thought and feeling. The self, or soul, passes outside itself, or externalizes its being, by a dual process of identification.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand it reaches forth on the mental plane by cognizing the character of the objects that it discovers outside itself. And on the other it flows out, and into, them in the mode of sympathy and love. Such is the basic relationship that it establishes with the outer world.

But behind this relatively simple situation there lies an arcane principle. For it was anciently taught that man in his essence is an androgynous being, male and female in one, and as a result related to the external realm in terms of an exact balance between wisdom and love. Hence it is only to the degree that he succeeds in unfolding both these attributes in conjunction that he can come into true association with reality.

The symbol of the Androgyne is of course deeply mystical, and familiar to students of esotericism and alchemy. But we are not concerned with it directly here. Our thinking in this field must be based upon a consistent and intelligible philosophy. It is necessary to show that masculine-feminine duality finds expression in what may be described as the general structure of our experience. In other words, we must have available some system of thought that will serve to explain how it is that we are related to the world around us in the twin modes of thought and feeling, and it must be such that the principles involved can be shown to apply in a definite fashion even

in respect of the most limited and concrete situations with which we are called upon to deal.

## 2. *The Nature of Matter*

In its attempts to externalize its nature the self finds itself engaged with a peculiar, obscure and universal medium that at once limits its manifestation and yet provides it with an opportunity for expression: what we know as 'matter', that state of being within which we all find ourselves inescapably embodied. As a result, the problem with which we are confronted is that of somehow making the most complete possible use of it as a vehicle for creativeness, while at the same time avoiding to the fullest degree being determined by its nature, and thus losing our spiritual integrity.

The orthodox physicist will tend to take the view that matter is eternal.<sup>2</sup> It must be regarded, he will affirm, as the foundation and support of all the infinite range of phenomena that have occurred throughout the history of this and myriads of other worlds. Although its true nature is still unknown to us, and although it is certainly very different from what it appears to be to the physical eye, we cannot get away from the fact that it is the enduring stuff out of which planets, solar systems and universes are made.

Now this reasoning may be correct so far as we restrict our attention to the physical plane of existence. Yet it may actually be the case that what we call 'matter' is really only a particular state, involving a relatively slow rate of vibration, of some more refined form of etheric substance which exists around us on a far more extended scale—and of which, incidentally, we can sometimes become aware through the exercise of our psychical faculties. When this subtle substance is as it were precipitated into the form of physical existence—much in the same way that water on freezing is transformed into ice—it becomes sufficiently dense to be perceptible by our physical senses. But it may also be dematerialized again, in which case what we know as a physical object disappears from our view. It is reasonable to suggest that modern developments both in nuclear physics and in psychical research go to suggest that this hypothesis is by no means as fanciful as it may sound. Moreover, have we not also to reckon with the very ancient oriental teaching regarding

Manvantaras, according to which manifestation occurs in a series of pulsations, between which the cosmos subsists only in a latent condition?

But this at least is clear. We have no natural contact with the realm of the microscopic. All our strivings, discoveries (outside those made in the field of nuclear physics), emotions and aspirations are bound up in the closest fashion with 'matter' so far as it is known to us directly in macroscopic terms through the exercise of our physical senses. I am here not failing to allow for the fact that, as will appear later in this enquiry, we stand also in a very significant relation to the great Unseen. The point is that as long as we are embodied in physical matter this is our home, our ordeal, the earthly scene of our operations.

Further, one must note that those forms and processes that have for us the deepest human and spiritual meanings are disclosed to us on the surface of existence. Although the mechanical structure and the chemical composition of objects may be of deep interest to scientific enquirers, it remains true that the world of appearances *when experienced in the spiritual mode* provides us with material for arriving at a true understanding of the relations subsisting between God, man and the universe.<sup>3</sup> The constitution of the world is such that the final, outward and visible effect of all sorts of physical activities that are occurring, as it were, behind the scenes is the presentation to us of certain phenomena on the macrocosmic plane which are of deep significance for us irrespective of their invisible microcosmic and sub-microcosmic foundation. We are compelled, of course, to pierce beneath the surface. But there is an important difference between a penetration through it to the physical composition of objects, and a penetration to their interior, spiritual nature.

Again, we have no direct transactions with matter as a whole. Our concern is alone with its transient formations. It is a familiar saying of the *Buddhists* that 'all aggregations are impermanent'. This is surely undeniable. Both the productions of Nature and those of man persist only for a certain period of time, short or long, and are then resolved back into the matter out of which they were originally moulded. Once the process of formation is completed everything, animate and inanimate, begins to deteriorate, and if left to itself will



finally pass out of existence. While in one direction constructive forces are active in creating and maintaining forms, in another destructive forces are active in dragging everything down to a dead level of inertia and sameness. Both the fan and the lovely hand that once held it are in the end resolved into the same dust. The majestic temple finally collapses, its ruins to become obscured by vegetation. All the varied objects that are cast into the seas of the world are reduced by the action of salt water finally to the same irreversible condition.

It is only with such individual configurations that we as human beings have any serious relations at all. Matter-as-a-whole is simply a necessary postulate, something the existence of which we have to acknowledge, but with which we cannot in the nature of the case have any direct acquaintance—any more than we can have a direct acquaintance with water in general, space in general or electricity in general. So what it actually comes to is that our lives are passed in dealing with an endless succession of material configurations, processes and arrangements which challenge us continually to adaptation and reflection. Since such aggregations are the ground and basis of all the colours, sounds, odours, pressures and the like of which our sensational life is composed, this means that we are confronted unrenittingly with different combinations of qualities. And all of them are manifested only in a transient fashion.

Finally, it can be seen that matter exercises a special function in that it provides the basic condition for the existence of a cosmos. It might be described as a device, or an arrangement, for densifying thought and thereby impeding spiritual communication. Minds dwelling in an immaterial state would have no obstacles to prevent them from establishing contact with one another on their own plane—unless, of course, they were constituted on the Leibnitzian pattern as 'windowless monads'. All temporal processes would be abolished, or at least immensely reduced. For by definition there would be no material mechanism needed for the transmission of ideas.

Such is our actual circumscribed physical situation, however, that (apart from relatively exceptional transactions in the realm of telepathy) we can communicate with other minds only indirectly by messages conveyed through material channels. In order to understand the states of consciousness of the lower creatures we are com-

pelled to interpret as best we can their movements, and such noises as they make. In the case of our fellow human beings their capacity for speaking, writing and drawing makes the task of communication very much easier. But it remains true that it is only through the separative veil of matter that it can be achieved.

Further, all living beings on the surface of the globe are subjected to the onerous obligation of moving from one point to another by physical means alone. Instantaneous mental identification with the remote on the plane of thought must be translated into a relatively laborious process of transportation in space. Or to be more exact, we are compelled to traverse space, not imaginatively, but by accomplishing movements for which time is required. And it is basically our sense of the passage of time (of which we are oblivious when we are in a condition of exaltation) that is responsible for the oppressive character of so much of our mundane existence.

### 3. *Matter and Life*

We have seen earlier that we have no direct contact with 'matter', either directly, or in its totality. What we immediately experience is the effect upon us of its radiations,<sup>4</sup> which are converted by our peculiar psycho-physical organisms into subjective sensations. As a result we become intensely aware of the qualities of objects.

Now it is essential to recognize that the qualitative belongs entirely to the realm of the *irrational*. For it lies in its nature that it can only be experienced. We are directly aware of such phenomena as the pure blue of the sky, the smooth flowing of water between the banks of a stream, the howling of the wind, the texture of velvet, the saltiness of sea air, the majesty of snow-capped mountains, the purity and sweetness of flowers. Such impressions do not lend themselves in any way to being organized. Our relation to them is purely emotional. Our rational activity, on the contrary, is exercised in systematizing the formal elements in our experience. This is indicated clearly enough by the fact that modern science in building up its picture of Nature makes use almost exclusively of mechanical concepts. The colour, taste and aesthetic appeal of chemical substances are of quite incidental significance for its purposes; the system is

worked out as far as possible in terms of mathematical relations between quantitative units.

Moreover, as the result of the dominating influence of science upon our modern culture, we are all today accustomed to think mechanistically to such an extent that we have almost lost sight of the fact that the irrational element in our experience is of equal significance with the rational—in other words, that the sensitiveness of the female to quality is as important as the male sensitiveness to form. Only comparatively slowly, as a result of the investigations of anthropologists and psychologists, are we being forced to realize that—as the artists amongst us have always known—the function of feeling in relating us to reality is as fundamental as that of thought.

What, we must now ask, is the ultimate source of our powerful experience of the qualities of things? The materialist, doggedly persisting in his efforts to vindicate the claims of an outworn philosophy, will advance the view that 'matter' of itself generates the radiations by which we are all so effected. The more imaginative thinker, on the other hand, is convinced that what we are primarily concerned with in this connection is our association with Life, which is not the product of 'matter' but uses it instrumentally for its creative purposes.

However, as far as our present discussion is concerned we can leave this issue open. The essential point to be considered is that 'matter', whatever the mystery that lies behind it, must be thought of as the immediate source of the radiations that are translated by our organisms into the qualities of things. And it is with these qualities, which are almost infinite in their range, and produce every possible kind of effect upon our minds, that we are directly concerned as sentient beings. Our success in integrating the forces within our organisms depends upon the degree to which we render ourselves sensitive to their character, and control the reactions that they arouse within us.

It must of course be recognized that in relating 'ideas' to physical sensations we are fundamentally concerned with correlating two aspects of our mental life. For a concept and a sensation are both modifications of our consciousness. Nevertheless, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that as far as our actual, immediate experience goes they are experienced as antithetical in character. Why should

we be impelled to distinguish so scrupulously between the realm of fancy and imagination and that of 'objective reality' if the second did not expose us to impressions of a very special order? What it comes to is that that part of the mind which is engaged in recognizing and combining ideas functions in a widely different way from that part of it which registers our contact with individual, material objects—and this to such an extent that at one end of the scale failure to bring them into relation can lead to neurotic, and even psychotic, disturbances, while at the other their synthesis opens the door to liberation and ecstasy.

#### 4. Discipline and Sustenance

We must now consider the actual effects of the qualities of matter upon our minds. I begin with the negative influences which they exert upon us.

On the most elemental level of all the nature of matter is 'dark', passive and inert. This is a remarkable fact, since on the plane of the sub-microscopic it is intensely refined and active. Yet it happens to be so constituted that the final, statistical outcome of this highly vibrating inner condition is registered by our physical senses as one of density. As the scientists have made plain, by a process of mutual cancellation the total activities of the swarm of particles of which, say, a table is composed present us with the smooth, resistant, relatively unchanging surface with which we are familiar. The mark of such bodies is that they are in a state of apparent fixation. As a result a stone, a fragment of metal, a piece of wood, a stagnant pool are all in a condition in which they are acted upon rather than active. And so it is with all material substances so far as they are regarded in their mechanical aspect. The surface of the globe is covered with a vast mass of *stuff*, either moulded into transient forms, or existing in a loose and unorganized state, that is continually being moved about, triturated, aggregated and dissipated by the activity of natural forces, such as gravitation, heat, chemical activity, and the rotation of the earth. While of course man takes an energetic hand also in the process.

The point to note is that matter *per se* is tending always towards a condition of entropy. Unless new energy is introduced into it from



another level there will be a movement towards uniformity, and differentiation will decrease—as when, for instance, a cultivated region passes by stages into a featureless desert. The key to this levelling process lies in the fact that matter contains within itself no principle of *order*. It is simply substance (in the more popular sense of the term), and acquires significance only when it has been built into some structure that it cannot of itself provide, whether that structure be static or dynamic in nature. It must be thought of as a mass of raw material on which character and definition are imposed by agencies of different types, both natural and human. In a word, it acquires a positive aspect for us only when it has been subjected to *form*.

An important implication of this situation is that man is so situated that he is all the time being acted upon by two opposite forces. In one direction he is continually being dragged down by influences of an unorganized type that have their origin in the distinctive properties of matter. And on the other he is continually being uplifted and liberated by co-ordinating influences that have their origin in a higher region of being. Moreover, in both cases a process of aggregation is entailed. We can think of him, therefore, as involved at one and the same time in a Descending and an Ascending Spiral.

The essence of the matter is that in all the processes of life there is manifested a constant tendency towards intensification and reinforcement, either in the spiritual or the material mode. To put it simply, both order and disorder are tending all the time to establish themselves ever more completely in their surroundings. One may describe the situation by saying that in respect of both types of Spiral each element that is added renders the condition more propitious for the introduction of others of a similar order.

With respect to the Descending Spiral, there is nothing in any particular material manifestation which involves it in any *necessary* relationship with any other. The effect is that undue response to a given material influence will only expose one to others on the same level, with a resulting degradation of the character of one's activity. For a condition is established in which everything is increasingly reduced to the same plane, all the elements involved being finally completely subjected to the levelling influence of matter. The vital

forces become discordant, and a process, brief or protracted, sets in which concludes, if it is not arrested by the introduction of positive forces into the equation, with a paralysis of all creative activity. Separation prevails completely over unification and the spiritual becomes obliterated by the material.

On the other hand it is significant that just as a descending spiral ends in the complete effacement of distinctions, so an ascending one makes for an ever-increasing emphasis on *form*. As the level rises all the elements concerned become more and more clear and distinct in themselves, as well as more harmonious with one another. The progress is away from featureless monotony to crystalline order, from obscurity to lucidity, from external to internal organization. The glorious inherent nature of things begins to disclose itself, and the element of the 'accidental' is increasingly diminished. There appears the full significance of the Many in the One. Of which more later, after certain preliminary considerations have been dealt with.

The practical application of the principles we have been considering is that the individual can only preserve his spiritual integrity if he resists the tendency we all possess to be conditioned by the purely material characteristics of objects. In other words, he must avoid reacting to mere weight, bulk and denseness, and the separative influence of bodies that are extended in space. Safety lies only in keeping the mind resolutely above this level, and permitting the material to make its claims upon him only to the degree that it is associated for him with forms and processes of a liberating and life-releasing type. Thus, matter as represented by the dirt on the surface of a piece of furniture is to be removed physically and at the same time not allowed to depress the mind. But matter as represented by the wood of which it is fashioned calls for respect and appreciation, since it is subordinated to idea and function. An elementary example, perhaps, but one that is not without significance.

As to the function of matter in its positive aspect, we have to recognize that the material is not to be regarded simply as an obscuring and limiting medium, veiling from us the sublimity of forms which if we were not in a fallen condition we should be able to contemplate directly. For to begin with there is an element in matter which cannot, as extreme idealists would have us believe, be taken up completely into the domain of mind. In fact, we shall be wiser

if we assume that it is only through the existence of matter that the complementary principle to Thought—that of Love—can find external expression. In other words, the embodiment of ideas in the realm of substance is a correlative revelation of Being. Reality discloses itself to us on the one hand through the intelligible element in our experience, and on the other through the sheer physicality<sup>6</sup> of the objects which exist in the external world. And unless we learn to respond imaginatively to this element of corporeality our vision remains monoptic, and therefore partial and misleading.

We can, if we wish, think of the universe as a system of Divine Ideas<sup>6</sup>, and in contemplating it as such we are obviously on the mental plane. So far we remain within the Platonic tradition. But at the same time the great majority of the ideas which are presented to our attention are incarnated in physical matter which, as we have seen, is the foundation of our experience of the qualitative, by which our feelings are so deeply affected. It can be seen, therefore, that when it comes to self-expression in the objective field man is called upon to relate himself to it with the two basic elements in his being: his intellectual and his emotional nature. Hence there is a direct correspondence, on the one hand between his intellect and the formal aspect of objects, and on the other between his emotional life and their qualitative aspect. Moreover, to the degree that he succeeds in synthesizing these powers within his own soul he will become capable also of attaining to a unified vision of the phenomena that are disclosed to him in the external world.

We can now consider certain ways in which contact with the material aids us in elevating the plane of our consciousness. First of all, it will be plain that unless it existed there would be no means available to us of giving substance to any of our ideas. The concept of creation has very great significance for us just because it implies the association of purely mental activity with phenomena that exist for our senses. What is a mere notion, project or fancy compared with an existent, embodied achievement in space and time? Are we not all perfectly justified in feeling that creative production in the realm of outer existence is a vast advance upon dreaming and theorizing? We undoubtedly achieve something worthy and real whenever we build a properly designed house, school or theatre, dig a canal, maintain a system of transport, or cross the sea in ships.

And this, be it noted, is quite compatible with the fact that the impressions we receive from the objects with which we are thus associated may be very different from the objects as they are in themselves. It is quite naive to suppose that epistemology can undermine art, religion or ethics!

Again, it is difficult not to conclude that this 'matter' in which we embody our mental conceptions must in some sense be considered as 'real', as having an actual extra-mental existence. And this means that through being there outside ourselves it furnishes us with a means that we should lack otherwise of realizing the nature of our own inner life. It provides the Mirror by gazing into which man may become aware of his own capacities. Yet it is a Mirror that he is incapable of bringing into existence by his own efforts. Only God can create a universe as the enduring setting of the human drama. All that men and women can do is to try to understand how it is constituted and the range of possibilities that it offers them.

Nor is matter the Mirror of man's thoughts alone. For we have to reckon also with Nature. Impressed on the physical realm are an infinitude of forms and signatures which have another source. And unless we are exceedingly materialistic in our outlook we find it difficult to conceive of them except as having their origin in the Divine Mind. (So far as they are corrupted it must be in the last resort through man's perversity. But this is an esoteric theme that it would be out of place to discuss here.)

There is also another aspect of the question of which account must be taken. Objectification, as compared with mere speculation and calculation, calls for the exercise of the will, and this often in the most determined fashion. When it is active on the spiritual plane man—on a religious view of life, at least—comes into closer association with his Creator, and thus gives his inner nature more complete expression. And apart from this metaphysical consideration it is plain that he cannot develop his character or attain to self-realization in any serious sense unless in one direction he struggles continually to master external conditions, and in another—for there is an oriental complement of our western 'rugged individualism'—learns to submit with inner peace and sweetness to the ineluctable.

Again, it should be evident that matter exercises a beneficent function in that it provides the foundation for persisting and reassur-



ing appearances. Admittedly they are essentially impermanent, but they are at least extremely stable in relation to the protean creations of our unbridled fancy and imagination.<sup>7</sup> Objects and situations can be established in the material world for relatively long periods, and this in one aspect makes for a great sense of peace and security. For we are privileged to work out our problems in terms of units which remain substantially the same. Were we condemned to live in a universe in which everything around us was continually changing its form and aspect, and this even in a rhythmic manner, we should succumb to extreme exhaustion, if we did not actually become insane! Moreover, the exercise of the will, which is of the deepest spiritual significance, would assume a relatively trivial character; for what satisfaction is there to be derived from evoking only insubstantial phantoms which succeed one another forever without ever finding an abiding place in the realm of fixation?

We must also give due weight to the fact that matter, in relation to mind, performs a very important function. In respect of all his experience man is involved deeply in an inescapable subjective-objective relationship. And as far as his thinking is concerned, this means that unless forms were continually presented to him in the external world already embodied in material substances he would be unable to organize his mental life at all. Order, rhythm, structure confront him on all sides during the whole period of his waking life, and may thus be said to reinforce his native power of controlling the realm of form.

Consider, for example, the case of a man who is studying the structure of a majestic piece of architecture. Its proportions and perspectives make a deep impression upon his mind. It would be beyond his power to construct such a complex of ideas out of his own imagination alone. Nor could the original architects have done their work had not other edifices and a wide range of natural forms been already before their eyes. Moreover, even when the image of the building is presented to the observer in objective form he is obliged to return to the spectacle again and again in order to grasp its full import. His power to understand the relations involved depends to a marked degree upon the fact that they are disclosed to him in material embodiment and not merely on the mental plane. His intellectual processes are improved when he is able to exercise

them in conjunction with the activity of his emotional nature which, as we have seen, is stimulated by sense experience.

So we meet with the interesting situation that, although from one point of view man's energies are largely directed to resisting the influence of matter on his soul, from another it provides him with a repository or treasury of forms that aid him immensely in understanding both his own nature and that of reality. But this is a debt which the idealist, with his excessive faith in the native power of reason, is usually very reluctant to acknowledge.

Finally, it will be evident that the qualitative elements in our experience in their higher aspect exercise an inspiring and liberating influence upon us in all sorts of ways. According to the nature of the radiations involved, we experience effects of purity, sweetness, freedom, peace, repose, invigoration, magnetism, transparency—the list is of course endless. Through these diverse manifestations the very being of things is speaking to us, and if we sensitize ourselves to them correctly we achieve the most direct communion with Life that is possible for us as limited human beings.

### *5. The Problem of Expression*

In dealing with the problem of the relation of the soul to the external and visible world it is essential not to lose sight of the principle affirmed at the beginning of the present chapter: our experience of the material and our experience of the immaterial cannot be basically separated. In some deep and mystical sense the Within and the Without, the Unextended and the Extended, the Summit and the Base, are one. Dualism is fatal. The phenomenal world must be thought of as an extension in space and time of that which has no material existence at all, yet which is truly manifested within them. In the Kabbalistic symbolism this notion is expressed by the pronouncement that Kether (the Crown) is in Malkuth (Earth), and Malkuth is in Kether. But this is a truth of a metaphysical order the significance of which is only apparent to the advanced mystic.

It should also be evident that in seeking to bring his inner condition into a creative relation with the world of the senses man finds himself in a strange, and as some see it, a poignant situation. For on

the one hand if his creations are of a serious character he will have an insistent feeling that the ideas with which he has identified himself are of a spiritual, and therefore an enduring, order. And on the other he will be painfully conscious of the fact that so far as they find embodiment in matter they will be incorporated in objects that are destined inescapably to be swept away with the passage of time. So distressing is this contrast between being and becoming, between the necessary and the contingent, between the nobility of our higher human aims and the limited scope provided by Nature and man for their realization, that many sensitive spirits are deeply discouraged, or even reduced to impotence, through reflection on this sombre theme.

Again, the problem of self-expression is inextricably bound up with that of evil. For to enter the sphere of action is to expose oneself inevitably to the danger of using the mind and will in a perverse and destructive manner or to the outcome of their abuse by others. I shall not, however, attempt to discuss this question in any detail in these pages, since my purpose, as remarked earlier, is to consider the nature of man's creative activity so far as it is not frustrated and inhibited by negative influences. It may be suggested, however, that the mystery entailed in the appearance of Reality in Time is actually of a more fundamental order than that of the limitation of light by darkness, since it would still remain even if at some remote stage in our human evolution men and women were inhabiting the earth in a sinless state.

Now to consider what is actually involved when a person attempts to relate himself creatively to the realm of which his senses make him aware. First of all, we must remember that on the deepest subjective level he dwells in an uninhibited state. In the magical world of his inner life he enjoys a relatively high degree of freedom. Although there are distinct limits—such as that imposed by his native mental power—to what he is capable of imagining, he is undoubtedly the master of a rich and extensive world of ideas that he can manipulate as he wills in the blessed world of phantasy.

It is of course true that to the degree that he is neurotically afflicted his capacity for using his mind freely will be inhibited. There will be obsessive imagery in one direction, and interior tensions preventing unconditioned response in the other. But the

essential point so far as this particular issue is concerned is that, whatever the character of his subjective life, whether his mind is functioning on the level of that of Einstein or he is an inmate of a mental hospital, he will meet, when it comes to entering the realm of actualities, with certain typical obstructions, resistances, allurements and dangers—in other words, with the challenge of the objective.

In what exactly does this challenge consist? First of all, to be active in the physical realm is to be involved with matter in the sense that we most simply and basically experience it: as a massive, resistant medium which is continually restricting the free play of our higher faculties—although of course it has a positive aspect, which we considered earlier.

With this elemental substance man is engaged in an unremitting fight from his birth to his death. He must be ceaselessly active in removing dust and dirt from places where they are not wanted, and in correcting and compensating for the influence of gravity in drawing downwards to earth level everything he bravely attempts to set up. He must be constantly vigilant to prevent impurities accumulating within his own body, in overcoming the fatigue resulting from moving it about within a gravitational field, and in seeing that it is not obstructed or injured by the physical objects around him. Further, he has to deal with matter so far as it forms the bodies of living organisms. All of them follow the law of their own being, and will interfere with him seriously, or even destroy him, if he does not rigorously control their behaviour in relation to himself.

His life-long struggle with the mechanical and the biological may be illustrated by the fate of a building that is left untended. The roof will fall in, the foundations settle, the woodwork rot, and vegetation make its inroads at every point. But the sequence of conditions that thus occurs is not fraught with any deep meaning; what we are observing is simply the stages by which natural and biological processes that were temporarily arrested while the place was in order are re-establishing themselves now that the watchful hand of man is no longer in control. So strong are the forces with which he has to contend in this respect that it can fairly be said that up to this point in his history he has succeeded in resisting natural influences only to a relatively limited degree.

Again, incarnation commits man to coming to terms with a vast

range of individual manifestations, of which he must have accurate knowledge if he wishes to remain objective. As a responsible personality I must be able to distinguish between vagueness and phantasy on the one hand and realistic appraisal on the other. Otherwise I shall fail seriously as a craftsman, a householder, a soldier, a traveller, or a citizen, and be living most of the time in a dream world of my own. There are a multitude of things which are such, and not otherwise; and there is no way of avoiding the demands that they make upon me.

I find also that I am called upon to live in a world governed by definite and regular laws. Thus in the mental realm I cannot express myself effectively unless I respect the demands of logic, grammar and aesthetics. I must conform to those conventions that are essential if human beings are to make intelligible communications to one another. Otherwise such statements as I attempt, whether as speaker, writer, painter or musician, will have subjective significance only. Nor can I escape the obligation of respecting the principles of moral behaviour.

Equally severe are the demands made upon me by the physical system of things. An infinitude of objects exists around me, related to one another in ways that I cannot modify. Fire burns, the audibility of sounds decreases with the distance, mountains rise above the valleys, unsupported bodies fall to the ground, snakes can be poisonous, movements in space demand time, without food the body dies. And so on. In a word, to be incarnated is to become subject to Cosmic Law.

Finally, I am all the time exposed to the influence upon me of other living creatures. With this an important factor is introduced into the equation. In the present chapter we have been considering the relation of the inner, uninhibited self to the external world. And we have seen that in seeking to express its nature outwardly it finds itself in relation with what we call 'matter', which is the invisible basis for the qualities displayed by objects. On the most elementary level the material provides a challenge to the soul through its mere inertia and resistance. Above that plane we have to reckon with it as it appears in the form of inanimate objects. And on the biological level it is met with as the substance which forms the bodies of living things.

In respect of all these manifestations it may be truly affirmed that matter provides the foundation for the appearance of qualities. But it must be noted that the qualities that have the most powerful effect upon us are those that are displayed by animate beings. For they are at once complex, rapidly changing and seductive, while at the same time we are concerned in this field with entities that do not simply exist passively as objects of our curiosity and admiration (such as precious stones, dewdrops, rocks or mountains), but which can in many cases act positively upon us, even to the extent of threatening our very existence, and this in a greater measure than do 'blind' natural forces. In fact, to be properly alive is to be exposed at every moment of the day to stimulating and disturbing influences exerted upon us by other living creatures. And of course we respond to them basically just because we are having dealings with that which corresponds in the objective mode to the vitality which we experience within our own beings.

Our discussion has brought into relief the fact that the distinction between the ideal and the actual is of basic significance. In his attempts to come to terms with objective realities man is called upon to adjust himself to the formal and the qualitative aspects of existence. The mark of the first is that it can be contemplated both directly on the mental plane or as it appears embodied in the realm of matter. The mark of the second is that it is to be met with only in that realm since, as we have seen, it is matter alone which provides the foundation for our sensory knowledge. What we actually experience when we find ourselves in contact with this strange substance are various physical sensations of a very definite type. That is to say, we feel the effect upon us of certain forces which are registered by us as cold, warmth, pressure, colour, movement and the like. This is what material, as compared with mental or ideal, existence actually signifies for us. To be incarnated is to become liable to certain sensations which we have no other means of experiencing. It is true that as our enquiry proceeds we shall find that they can be in a measure transcended by being placed in a wider context, but this is without doubt the stage of consciousness with which we all have to begin.

Now our experiences in the qualitative field not only make a very strong impact upon us, but they also present a marked contrast to that other type of experience in which we are concerning ourselves,

either mentally or in the realm of actuality, with the formal aspects of objects. As a result a conflict is entailed between the intellectual and the emotional sides of our nature. Although in one sense it may be said that our problem consists in learning to adapt our free internal activity to the exigencies imposed upon us by actual things and people, on a deeper level it resolves itself into that of integrating these two basic elements in our being.

This important theme will be considered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III

# THE POLES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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WE HAVE SEEN that man must be conceived of as an androgynous being, male-female in his constitution, and that his two fundamental functions therefore are those of thought and feeling. This will apply whether the person under consideration is of the masculine or the feminine sex, since the difference between them is one of emphasis only. What is dominant in the case of the man is subordinate in the case of the woman, and *vice versa*. But both elements are always present, and as the personality develops they become increasingly manifested and balanced.

### 1. *The Factor of Will*

Account, however, must be taken of the activity of the will.<sup>1</sup> In the last chapter I called attention to the fact that its exercise is of basic importance, since it is an essential condition for attaining self-realization, while when it is used on the spiritual plane it brings the individual into closer union with his Creator. Nevertheless, for the purposes of the present exposition I propose to consider it only as a sub-manifestation of the function of feeling. Although this may appear to some readers to be a somewhat surprising view to adopt, the considerations involved are really quite simple.

We are subject to all sorts of impressions that awaken desire within us. In certain cases our urges can be gratified without resort to particular effort. We are moved to inhale the perfume of a flower in the garden, and we do so quite spontaneously and naturally. We feel an impulse to eat food, go for a walk, gaze at a picture, and we take action accordingly. Satisfaction is always involved, since expression without frustration is everyone's idea of heaven. There is of course a delight in wrestling with obstacles, but such conquering of opposition is itself just another form of self-expression, the denial of which induces within us boredom and apathy.



Such is the structure of existence, however, that the realization of desire can in most cases only be attained at the cost of much persistence and patience. It is satisfying to receive the degree of B.Sc., but it requires a good deal of hard work and determination to obtain it. So also with all serious enterprises. What it comes to, therefore, is that in seeking to reach our objectives we are thrown back upon the exercise of will, the mark of which is that it sustains us during that period, short or long, which elapses between the first response to an attractive idea and the final phase of gratification and consummation. It is not to be thought of, then, as a further factor introduced into the psychological equation, but rather as the form assumed by desire during this inescapable period of transition—desire cold, if you like. Will is simply that state of mind which we are compelled to cultivate as a result of living in a state of being in which the passage from conception to satisfaction is usually laborious, delayed and indirect. Whereas by contrast one of the definitions of Nirvana would be a condition in which thought, action and fulfilment could no longer be distinguished from one another—the ideal culmination of our experience as striving and suffering human beings.

We must not, of course, lose sight of the fact that the process of creation is the most exhilarating and uplifting experience vouchsafed to us, and that in undertaking it on the spiritual plane we place ourselves in a very deep relation to the Source of our being. Nor can we fail to realize either that our most profound problems are those that arise in connection with the acts of choice that we find ourselves compelled to make. But all this relates to the mysterious depths of our subjective existence. The point I want to establish is that the strains and intensities that are entailed in the exercise of volition belong to the sphere of our private and secret lives as individuals. And what we are concerned with in this particular enquiry is what may be described as the realm of outworkings—the different kinds of relationships into which the individual enters as the result of his activity as a thinking and feeling being.

The issue will be clear to the reader. Men and women build schools, theatres and temples, write books, make discoveries in science, compose music, perfect schemes of organization, and the like. So far as they succeed in making serious contributions to culture our interest is centred primarily on their achievements. For

thereby they have transcended the limits of their 'private' experience and introduced new and shining threads into the fabric of life. It is true that their secret and personal sufferings and tensions will be of great interest to psychologists, as well as drawing out our human sympathy, but the fact remains that they are devoid of cultural significance. They occur only, as it were, behind the scenes, and pass away with the psycho-physical organisms of the individuals concerned. All that matters essentially as far as the development of culture is concerned is whether the bridge is well built, the dictionary free from mistakes, the statue nobly conceived and executed, the constitution wisely framed. The rest is in the hands of the doctors, the dieticians, the psychologists, the solicitors—and the undertakers. Truth and beauty alone endure, and we ourselves only to the degree that we succeed in ministering to them.

In view of these considerations I am making the assumption that for the purpose of the present exposition we can safely consider the activity of the will as being subordinate only in character.

## 2. *Abstract and Concrete*

What we have to examine, therefore, are the twin activities of thought and feeling. Their general nature is not difficult to recognize. When the consciousness is focussed on the mental plane we are concerned, first of all with taking note of the different features presented to us by objects, and then with discovering, as far as we can, the ways in which such features can be related to one another. We are engaged, that is to say, in analysis, speculation and reflection, with introducing order into a certain region of our experience. Further, we can go beyond this point and combine in a new and creative fashion the ideas we have discovered, thus expressing the innate power of the human intellect. It will be seen, therefore, that man's mental activity can range from such a simple matter as taking note of the fact that there are three books on the table to composing a symphony, devising a monumental piece of legislation, or propounding an original theory in the field of physics. But it remains true that the operations involved are essentially intellectual, involving always a process of abstraction.

The distinctive mark of feeling, on the contrary, is that it is

aroused first and foremost by the immediate and the concrete. This means that we expose ourselves to certain influences, some of them of a very strange nature, that reach us, and reach us only, from individual objects that display to us their material qualities. And in so doing we disregard, for the time being at least, the intellectual aspects they present. For example, when we are giving ourselves up emotionally to the experience of contemplating the quality of a rose in full bloom we are in a completely different frame of mind from that in which we analyse its chemical and physical attributes for scientific purposes.

I have of course simplified matters greatly by directing attention to two opposite states of mind which are never experienced by us in an unalloyed form. It is always a question of blending thought and feeling in some proportion or other. But for the sake of clarifying the issues it is important to identify and distinguish the limiting conditions at both ends of the series. What they involve we shall consider later. Our concern just now is with the deeply significant fact that we all have the capacity, in differing degrees, to concentrate upon these two planes of awareness.

This situation has always given the reflective serious cause for thought. It is obvious that man is so strangely constituted that he is capable of entering into two 'worlds' that on the one hand each give him deep satisfaction, but on the other are extraordinarily difficult to reconcile with one another. All sorts of problems result. Since thinking is basically a 'masculine' function, and feeling a 'feminine' one, there are, as we all know, everlasting misunderstandings and controversies regarding the respective claims of the sexes to understanding, perceptiveness and wisdom. Again, those who are sufficiently sensitive to appreciate the significance of these two approaches to knowledge are often impelled to the despairing conclusion that no true bridge can ever be built between the worlds of the poet and the scientist.<sup>2</sup> Intuition<sup>3</sup> and imagination on the one hand, and reason and analysis on the other, seem at times to be almost irreconcilable modes of relating oneself to reality. The contrast that Pascal drew between *l'esprit de finesse* and *l'esprit géométrique* appears to the critical to be fundamental.

Both in the realm of life and art there has always been a conflict between those who embody in their beings the Apollonian and the

Dionysian principles, and who are therefore either classicists or romantics at heart. In philosophy the same issue arises in respect of the conflicting claims of idealism and realism. And in the domain of religion the majestic, but relatively remote, God of the theologians and the philosophers is a very different being from the loving and burning God of the mystics. In other words, on every plane we are confronted with a conflict between the intellectual and the emotional sides of our human nature.

No one who considers this situation carefully can fail to recognize that the tension between these opposites, which are forever with us, points to the existence of some deep mystery lying behind them both. And it will be plain that its nature can only be disclosed with any decisiveness to those who have carried the practice of metaphysical contemplation to an advanced stage. As remarked earlier, however, our concern here is not with such high illuminations, but with exploring the character of a scheme of thought that attempts to indicate how our mental and emotional processes can be reconciled in more familiar realms of experience.

But much is demanded of anyone who attempts to undertake it. We have just taken a glance at the intellectual problems raised by the marked difference between these two modes of knowing, and must now consider what it signifies for us psychologically. It is evident that we experience them almost always as *opposites*. Whenever intellectual activity reaches a certain intensity it excludes anything in the nature of deep feeling. Conversely, to feel deeply is to become momentarily incapable of clear and detached thinking. In one case the individual is absorbed in the contemplation of abstractions and is indifferent to all emotional appeals, and in the other he is so fully identified with living, concrete and material reality that the 'impersonal' attitude to experience is for the time being an impossibility for him. The two states are, in fact, at opposite ends of the spectrum. Compare, for instance, the process of following intently a piece of mathematical reasoning with the intensely 'personal' moments that we live through in the realm of aesthetic contemplation, physical adventure, sex or religion.

Further, it is a notable fact that a considerable adjustment is demanded of us whenever we are called upon to make a rapid transition from one state of consciousness to another. A sudden

interruption will only too easily cause us to lose our train of thought. Again, if we have recently experienced a serious emotional disturbance we find it very difficult to concentrate on abstract themes. A man cannot think effectively if he is persistently haunted by a lovely feminine face, by the memory of some country from which he has just been miserably exiled, or by some disconcerting occurrence that threatens to upset the future course of his life. And in the opposite direction, if a person becomes absorbed in intense activities or in passionate relationships their character will be destroyed for him if he permits speculation and scepticism to intrude at the wrong moment. For most men and women, at least, the enjoyment of vital experience depends directly upon the deliberate or unconscious exclusion of abstract considerations. Again, it is a significant fact that we all have a deep and healthy impulse to compensate for any extreme concern with either intellectual or emotional experience by passing from one to the other to restore our balance. We realize, more or less clearly, that we have temporarily been living in one half of the universe only, and seek the satisfactions offered by the other. And this means that we implicitly acknowledge ourselves as limited beings who are unable to co-ordinate the two basic elements in our constitution except in a relatively restricted fashion.

What it comes to is that although neither purely intellectual nor purely emotional states are actually experienced by us, they can be taken as the two basic co-ordinates that we have to make use of in plotting our psychological graphs. And we can see further that the fact that we are capable of entering into, and even living for long periods within, states of mind that are so antithetical in character indicates the deep and searching nature of the synthesis that we are called upon to achieve before we can claim to be unified beings in any serious sense. In our present afflicted condition we spend almost all our time in alternating unproductively between thought and feeling, with consequent psychological fatigue. What is more, as a result of this failure in integration we are most of us incapable of giving ourselves up either to mental or emotional activity with any true spontaneity or fullness. So we can truly be described as 'divided beings'. Yet in our highest moments of contemplation and upliftment we are given an anticipatory notion of what would be the state of men's souls if they could contrive to harmonize the two

fundamental sides of their nature in any complete and enduring sense. Understanding and perception would be both elevated and conjoined, and the individual, released from his constrictive egotism, would awaken to consciousness in a new and transformed world.

A further point. It lies in the nature of ideas that they are inadequate to the demands of life. By this I mean that however clear and satisfying one's conception of the *general* character of a scheme or an enterprise, when it comes to translating it into objective terms it has always in some respect to be accommodated to actuality—as when the designer of an engine has to modify his original plan when it comes to building a model, or a craftsman finds himself obliged to respect the qualities of the medium in which he is working. It will also be evident that when we become concerned with intricate and living situations—such as a social gathering, or a religious ritual—the combinations of elements involved are so bewilderingly intricate that they can be analysed and systematized only to a very limited degree. As we all know, logic and life, calculation and spontaneity, prudence and art, can never be fully equated.

So in this respect also we experience distress; for what is implied is that our minds, which are occupied with concepts, are always in some measure out of gear with our feelings, which are awakened by the impressions which we receive from the immediate and changing elements in our environment. Moreover, it is surely significant that when on certain occasions we do actually succeed in solving our problems in this field we find ourselves obliged to recognize that it was by virtue of some subtle process of discernment of which we cannot give either ourselves or others a clear account. The reason is, I would suggest, that the mind has momentarily been functioning on a higher plane on which intellect and feeling are more fully synthesized than they are normally.

### 3. *The Domain of Isis*

We must now consider the situations that arise when people suffer themselves to be conditioned by the two extremes of sensory and mental experience.

We have seen that man's responses are potentially infinite. There is that deep within him which has a correspondence with everything

in the created world. But, as we all know, his power of identification with different orders of manifestation is severely restricted by various types of fixation, biological, racial and cultural in character. He lives and thinks as a lamentably conditioned being, impeded in his self-expression by every kind of prejudice, fear and attachment.

These inhibitions can be seen to have a dual source. From one point of view they appear as subjective in character. You are seduced by this, terrified of that, antagonized by something else, because the forces in your internal organism are in a state of disequilibrium. Otherwise you would adjust yourself to your problems easily and effectively. And up to a point this interpretation is acceptable enough.

But it is also true that it takes one only a certain way towards an understanding of the situation. For we have also to allow for the fact that people's states of mind are powerfully affected by their exterior environment and the behaviour to them of others. In fact the trauma, or psychic injury, externally produced, is a basic concept of therapeutic psychology. You are out of adjustment because of the years you spent in that horrible place, or because your father treated you so badly, or because some woman deceived you shamefully, or the like. In other words, you were subjected to undesirable influences from outside. And if we look into their character we find always that such forces are exerted upon the person through the medium of very definite material configurations. There are always involved individual scenes, objects, persons, each of which represents a particular arrangement of physical matter, whether it be a tree, an insect, a toy, a human face, a lake, or the interior of a room. These arrangements, or aggregations, represent temporary selections from an infinite number of possible combinations, and of course they may persist for any period of time, from an instant to the whole of a life-time. And they act potently and unremittingly upon those who are exposed to them.

Nor is this a matter of passive sensations only, for a formidable system of intellectual indoctrination comes only too often into play as well, as a result of which each of us from his earliest years is the victim of some particular conspiracy to prevent him from manifesting as a truly free spirit. We are presented all the time by the creators and moulders of opinion with formulations, interpretations and

standards, not to speak of catch-words, slogans and mesmeric suggestions, that are calculated to make us embrace a pathetically limited conception of the great world around us. In other words, we are exposed to the powerful combination of immediate, localized physical impressions and a restricted system of ideas provided by our teachers and masters as a means of reinforcing them. No wonder that we all find the task of achieving spiritual emancipation almost insuperable!

Leaving aside, however, this insidious cultural influence, we can see that the material acts upon our senses by its extraordinarily powerful qualities. The objects that appear as configurations within it are presented to us in the most definite, and one may say obtrusive, sense, endowed with the most vivid and disturbing qualitative attributes, making every sort of seductive appeal to our minds, localizing dangerously our attention, and weakening our power of judgment and our imaginative response to other forms of life.

And here one cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that abstractions as such have no deep effect upon our emotions. Matter exerts its influence upon us primarily through definite concrete objects that are immediately presented to our senses—and which, of course, continue to act upon us through the images they have left behind in our memories. Our feelings are called into expression most powerfully by the qualities possessed by the actual manifestations that we encounter in our environment. We are not fundamentally moved by abstract ideas, but by objective realities—in other words, by actual *things* and their relationships.

There is no question of denying, of course, that the study of purely theoretical problems—as in the field of mathematics, for instance—can be tremendously stimulating. But it is permissible, one must suggest, to distinguish between a condition of deep and massive feeling, such as is induced by any true experience of love or beauty, and something more of the order of nervous excitement resulting from intense mental concentration upon highly theoretical issues. In any case, it must be borne in mind that this state is quite exceptional in character in relation to our ordinary mental condition, and only a relatively small number of people are capable of experiencing it in any completeness.

As to the effect on our minds of 'ideas' of a less abstruse type, it



should be plain that they exert their influence upon us only because of the concrete realities that they represent, and to which we are responding through them. Thus it is with words like 'wife', 'home', 'fame', 'homeland', 'flag' and 'king', and for that matter with any formulations that touch the individual at all personally. In other words, their significance is essentially *symbolic*.

What stirs the feelings of a human being most deeply are physical sensations associated with the cravings of his emotional nature. This fundamental psychological truth is of course perfectly understood by advertisers, film producers, purveyors of sensationalistic literature, religious revivalists, and all those whose object it is to gain their ends by swaying men's feelings rather than by appealing to their rational judgment. The secret lies always in the skilful employment of powerful and arresting imagery which acts directly upon the deeper levels of the psyche and betrays the victim into irresponsible behaviour.

As for the individual himself, he knows no real satisfaction until he has passed through the symbol to the reality for which it stands. He wants to own, display and drive the coveted automobile, to hold the beautiful girl in his arms, to receive tangible coins and notes for his week's work, to build a real house upon a real plot of land, and to have real people visit him in it. He is not to be appeased by South Sea Bubbles, will-o'-the-wisps, or Spectres of the Brocken. In one sense at least he may claim to be a realist.

Space does not permit more than a brief reference here to the different kinds of affliction which result from imprudent reaction to the sensory. To consider the most elementary level first, it will be plain that uncontrolled response to purely biological urges has inevitably a degrading effect upon the mind and feelings. The mark of a 'person' is that he is unique, in that he both responds to existing ideas, and recombines them, in a free and original fashion. But to the degree that he becomes conditioned in a blind fashion by sex, anger, greed or fear or any other passion his responses cease to have an individualized character. In other words, he is reduced to a level of existence on which everybody reacts in the same way. The primitive obliterates the personalized and the spiritual note is lost. Hence the notoriously monotonous and dreary quality that attaches to all types of vice.

With respect to less extreme forms of limitation, the person concerned may be conditioned on the more simple level by passive accommodation to the habitual, the commonplace and the prosaic, by, in fact, the more uninspiring elements in his environment. He may develop passionate and binding attachments to occupations, places and people, and suffer acutely when his links with them are severed. He may give himself up to nostalgic dreaming over an irrevocable past, of which he probably cherishes in any case a falsified picture. He may be too readily perturbed and agitated by strong physical impressions. As an energetic and responsive extravert he may pay for his sensitiveness to the passing occasion by an inability to grasp any scheme of general ideas that could aid him to place his experiences in a proper perspective. He will then be disastrously indifferent to that impressive picture of the cosmic system that is being created for us by the patient labours of men of science, and have little or no appreciation of the vistas that are open to the mind in the domain of philosophy and metaphysics.

He may be so absorbed in what he is momentarily doing that he weakens his subconscious sense of his own identity, thus becoming only a sort of psychological reflection or equivalent of what he is occupied with externally. He may live intensely in the sphere of his immediate environment, fulfilling his being by devotion to his family, his work and his local interests, but pay for this satisfaction by a deep anxiety regarding the wider aspects of experience that he is thus excluding from his attention. And if he is closely identified with the realm of physical existence he will almost certainly be uneasy regarding the great world of the Invisible, and very likely antagonistic to any ideas that suggest its reality and its claims upon him.

And even when a person is responding to the impermanent aspect of existence creatively the integration that he achieves is likely to be of a dangerously limited order. The typical case is that of the artist. His attitude to the world is basically complementary to that of the man of science, who represents the opposite pole of consciousness. His 'genius' is primarily 'feminine', residing in his exceptional sensitiveness to the realm of quality. He is peculiarly responsive to the phenomena that are presented to him concretely through the physical senses, and the impressions that he thus receives provide

him with material that he organizes and controls in giving his productions a formal character. But this faculty, which is distinctively 'masculine', and which he shares with all other creative spirits who are properly endowed intellectually, assumes in his case a secondary function only. What makes him an artist is essentially his capacity for experiencing and interpreting the world of appearances, and therefore the ephemeral. This explains also why his power to create depends directly upon the depth of his feelings, and why also his thinking finds expression, not in abstract speculation, or in manipulating scientific concepts, but in articulating the experiences which sensitive emotional response has placed within his reach.

This is the positive side of the picture. The reverse is represented by the fact that his preoccupation with the sensory makes in most cases for a corresponding weakness in two fundamental respects. In the first place, since he has usually a relatively undeveloped capacity for understanding general principles (and thereby placing himself in a more secure relation to the permanent), he tends to suffer seriously from emotional instability. And in the second place he is but rarely willing (if he is a westerner, at least) to undertake that interior and stabilizing discipline which consists in inward and concentrated withdrawal from the outer world in order to find in the subjective depths of being a centre of calm and power to sustain his soul in its relations with the dangerous, seductive and deceptive realm of sensate experience. In other words, although he will go to almost any lengths in practising restraint and control in producing his works, his performance in respect of that deeper and ultimately (one must insist) more constructive labour of regulating the processes of the inner being is in most cases commensurately weak.

Finally, in respect of all 'feminine' reactions to externals there is a basic principle involved. Anyone who succumbs in any fashion to the appeal of the sensational is evidently associating himself in an uncreative fashion with perishable material manifestations. The result is that his emotions are affected. Now all emotional states are themselves transient, continually giving place to one another. So a connection discloses itself between a temporary configuration in the external objective world and a temporary psychological state within the soul of the individual. What it comes to, therefore, is that we have established a correlation between matter, emotion and the time

process. And as we proceed we shall discover that it is of considerable significance.

#### 4. *The Mental Approach*

We must now see what is entailed when a person instead of being conditioned by his emotional reactions to material phenomena is conditioned instead by his concern in the 'masculine' mode with mental relationships.

It will be evident that the excessively intellectual type of person will be continually liable to become occupied with the abstract and the theoretical at the expense of his response to the dynamic and ever-changing processes of life. He will be unduly fascinated by the mental aspects of any situation, and easily seduced by mere ingenuities as compared with valid principles. He will prejudice his enquiries at the outset by formulating his problems in the wrong terms, or approaching them from an unpropitious angle. He will fail to take account of those deeper patterns and rhythms which are common to different fields of our experience, and which provide the key to unifying branches of knowledge which our contemporary scientists and philosophers find themselves unable to co-ordinate. And he will make the mistake of using language which is inappropriate to the theme which he is discussing.<sup>4</sup>

In particular, merely intellectual activity which is unrelated to any deeper processes in the soul results in that tiresome superficiality which is so characteristic of our present over-mentalized culture. As a result of the impressions that are continually being made on his mind by the press, the cinema and the radio—not to speak of the influence exercised upon him by our modern educational institutions—the typical person of today exhibits a remarkable capacity for seizing upon the external features of what is presented to him, giving them their correct names, and dealing easily with the more obvious relations into which they can be seen to enter with one another.

But this swift and facile manipulation of surface information is unfortunately achieved at the expense of a loss of the power to surrender emotionally to what is immediately presented to his attention. He lacks the capacity to absorb in patience and love the spiritual quality of objects, and as a result his inner life remains

impoverished. Owing to an excessively mental emphasis he is unable to *commune* with the living realities around him, and all sorts of nervous disturbances are the inevitable result.

Again, the mental type is always uncertain and at a disadvantage whenever he is called upon to come to terms with vital personalities, dramatic and swift-moving events, or powerful elemental forces. For here again he pays a serious price for his disregard of the deeper instinctive processes in his being.

Naturally, one of the strongest temptations to intellectualism is that provided by our extreme modern concern with science. In view of the fact that the whole character of our contemporary civilization is being increasingly determined by scientific thinking it is important to realize as clearly as possible its more significant psychological implications.

One must begin by giving full recognition to the fact that dedication to serious scientific research develops in the individual some admirable habits of mind—objectivity, patience, dispassion, and a deep humility in face of the vastness of the cosmic scheme within which man finds himself called upon to live. At the same time, however, it is no less evident that the worker in this field is exposed to certain psychological dangers as the result of concentrating his attention so closely upon one particular level of experience. There are, of course, numbers of scientists who combine their technical proficiency with a real sensitiveness to other aspects of human knowledge, fully respecting, for instance, the values of art and religion. But this is a matter, it would seem, of native endowment and temperament. The essential point is that the scientific way of thinking is not in itself calculated to render one sympathetic to alternative approaches to truth. On the contrary, it is unfortunately much more likely to limit one's appreciation of their significance. The cultural value of a scientific training is, in fact, decidedly limited—as has been made abundantly clear by Mr Anthony Standen in his witty and penetrating essay, *Science is a Sacred Cow* (Sheed and Ward, 1952).

The essence of the matter is that the knowledge which is so brilliantly amassed and organized through technical researches is presented to the mind in almost complete dissociation from those wider aspects of experience with which it is naturally related. The

detachment and exactness that are thereby achieved are from one point of view impressive enough, but there is produced in the process an effect of pseudo-completeness that at the same time deceives the uninitiated and chills and repels the more imaginative observer. The effect is that in only too many cases the intellect acquires a materialistic bias. All non-physical manifestations tend to be regarded with considerable scepticism, are wrongly evaluated, or are dismissed as being merely 'epiphenomenal' in nature.

For this disposition of mind we have already paid a considerable price. There is obviously a significant connection between the dominant role played by science in our modern culture and the disastrous decline of religious faith and vision which we are today witnessing on all sides. It should therefore be apparent that scientific thinking, in the mode that it is at present developed, can have no claim to possessing an organic character.

One of the effects of localizing the attention in this arbitrary fashion is that the development of science itself is basically impeded. There are astonishing advances to be recorded in the field of technology and in the extension of the range of our knowledge of phenomena. But the keys to the deeper processes both of matter and of life continue to be withheld from the investigator—for the sufficient reason that he does not recognize the need for anything more than purely intellectual effort in struggling with his problems. The notion that spiritual dedication and discipline (the scientist of genius is, of course, a case apart) if it were widely practised by scientific enquirers would in time lead to a transformation of our knowledge in this field is taken seriously at present only by a relatively small minority. In other words, there is practically no appreciation of the significance of the principle that I am concerned in this essay to affirm: that deeper knowledge of reality is accorded to us only to the degree that we unify the mental and the emotional elements in our experience.

Space does not permit of any detailed discussion of the specific ways in which an excessively scientific approach to knowledge limits the unfolding of the spiritual nature. But I will observe that in the first place the observer cuts himself off from the possibility of any really illuminating experience of the objects he is studying, and this through the fact that the method which he is using imposes upon

him the necessity of regarding them as existing in complete independence of his own mind. In other words, he places himself on what is relatively an inferior plane of awareness, on that plane of sensory cognition on which the knower and the known are separated from one another to a maximum degree. And there is naturally a commensurate limitation of the illumination which is accorded to him as a result. Or to express it differently, purely scientific knowledge is appropriate only to the lower levels of that hierarchical structure the character of which will be examined in a later chapter.

Another point is that the scientific investigator, who is rightly enough concerned to ensure that his personal reactions and sympathies do not prejudice his objective findings, usually has little realization of the positive and creative function exercised by feeling on a higher level in the realm of art and religion by bringing into relief the deeper character of the object which the mind is contemplating. To put it more simply, on this plane full emotional response becomes an essential condition for the disclosure of the phenomenon that is being examined. And it will be evident also that a more complete order of psychological synthesis is involved in this order of knowing than in purely detached scientific observation. For it is now necessary to maintain a critical and detached attitude of mind in relating oneself to an object which arouses the feelings to the fullest degree.

Again, it should be recognized that any extreme preoccupation with abstractions that are made, as they are always made in science, from the full character of the object as it is immediately presented to the attention will both weaken the emotional nature and tend to produce nervous disturbances in the organism—although not necessarily on an obvious level. For man is in his deeper being a whole, and this impels him naturally to respond primarily to phenomena which have an integral character. And this can only lead one to conclude that if ever the deeper vital rhythms come to be better understood scientific thinking will be developed in conjunction with a proper responsiveness to the elements in our experience to which they are basically related. This, it must be emphasized, is a realizable ideal, however remote it may be from our present performance in this field.

Another point. It will easily be seen that the cultivation to any marked degree of the scientific attitude of mind will inevitably weaken to some degree the individual's capacity for introspection—apart, of course, from his ability to analyse physical sensations and the like for technical research purposes. For if all your powers are devoted to turning your attention outwards upon the world of phenomena you will naturally have a less secure hold upon that rich world of inner and transcendental experience in which the seers and mystics are at home. You will very likely become extremely sceptical regarding the reality of supraphysical realms of being, and your sensitivity to spiritual guidance through intuitive channels will be seriously diminished. In other words, you will pay a serious price for the command which you have established over the realm of physical forces.

In concluding this survey I must make it clear that I do not in any way fail to recognize the amazing character of the achievements which lie to the credit of modern science. My concern at this point is simply to indicate some of the respects in which its technique is unpropitious to the development of what I describe as organic awareness.<sup>5</sup>

### *5. Philosophy and Reality*

Something must now be said regarding the effects of intellectualism as they find expression in the field of philosophy. The view I wish to advance is that although philosophical thinking of a more orthodox type gives us command over only one side of experience, this fact is far from being properly appreciated.

It lies in the nature of philosophical enquiry that it is concerned with conditions and situations of the most general type. Hence philosophers occupy themselves with problems relating to the nature of space and time, epistemology, the character of being, the meaning of substance, causality and the like. This undertaking is, of course, legitimate enough.

But at the same time a difficulty presents itself. For it is evident that the general scheme of things constitutes only the setting or framework within which an almost infinite range of vital manifestations occur. In other words, Life is everlastingly bringing into exis-



tence every sort of transient and individual manifestation, and these we encounter throughout our lives in bewildering abundance. Collectively they constitute the great mass of our experience, which is concerned essentially with the realm of Becoming.

How is the philosopher to deal with it? He can, of course, treat the idea of change as yet another general concept, to be brought into relation with those (such as that of extension) with which he is already engaged. It will then necessarily acquire a purely abstract character, as part of the investigator's philosophical stock-in-trade. That is to say, he will concentrate his attention upon those characteristics which are possessed by *all* bodies which are in a state of change, and consider the conclusions which suggest themselves as a result.

There have appeared, however, philosophers (like William James and Bergson) who have refused to remain satisfied with this approach to the problem. For they have been greatly concerned to vindicate the significance of man's experience, not of change regarded as an abstract principle, but of the actual fact of the changing—which is, of course, a very different matter. And this has naturally led them to conclude that the type of systematic logical thinking which has always been the accepted technique of philosophical enquiry is applicable only in a field which has been abstracted from the wider, and more vital, realm of our living experience. Bergson's conception of the rational mind as an apparatus for fixing the flow of a continuously moving stream of events will be familiar to the reader. The essence of his position was that he regarded the intellect as a mechanism for illicitly converting the dynamic into the static.

Now unfortunately the majority of those philosophers, academic or otherwise, who were concerned to emphasize the significance of Becoming succumbed to the temptation of elevating it above Being, and thereby naturally exposed themselves to searching criticisms from thinkers who saw more deeply into the question. For it could be demonstrated to the satisfaction of most students of the subject that the Philosophy of Change leaves a number of basic problems unsolved.

On the other hand it is not to be denied that these revolutionaries had attained to an insight which could not but be embarrassing to

the typical Aristotelian thinker, and for this reason. Man is born in a natural and organic relation to Life, and is therefore instinctively dissatisfied with any way of thinking that fails to do proper justice to this fact. Now it is plain that the more orthodox type of philosopher, in his attempts to get down to absolute fundamentals, is reducing the range of his experience to a minimum. Thus we find him conscientiously scrutinizing a coin from different angles in order to discover what justification we have for describing it as 'round'. Or again, we find him considering the character of that well-known philosophical property, the solid mahogany dining table, and speculating regarding the relation of its hard polished surface to its invisible being or substance. In other words, for the sake of clarification the relation between the knower and the known is placed on the most elementary possible level.

But although it is of course necessary that we should have a proper understanding of the basic elements in our experience, it is also essential that we should deal philosophically with manifestations as they are presented to us in their organic wholeness. It is, in fact, preposterous that a person who claims to be investigating the character of *reality* should imagine that he can expect to discover it by the process of depressing his consciousness at the outset to the most commonplace level of awareness! All that can possibly be gained by such a procedure is a knowledge of the most general conditions under which it discloses itself to us. This surely should be evident enough.

What it comes to, therefore, is that we have to take account of two different conceptions of the purpose of philosophical thinking. It may be held that, as we have seen, the object in view is to investigate the foundations of all forms of existence—and this is the classical tradition. Or it may be held on the other hand that the philosopher should in addition examine the general principles controlling the dynamic manifestations which take place within this universal scheme. And what this really implies is that he must study the processes of life—in other words, the drama that is enacted on that stage of which the traditional type of philosopher attempts to give us an account. This, it must be insisted, does not amount to an impermissible conversion of philosophy into psychology, since what is sought is an understanding of certain wide categories of

thought in relation to those with which the philosophical enquirer is already engaged.

The scope of enquiry in this field receives as a result an extension, the significance of which becomes apparent if, for instance, we compare the classic definitions of philosophy as the study of First Principles with that given by Schopenhauer, who affirmed that it 'is nothing but the correct and universal understanding of experience itself, the true exposition of its meaning and content'.

But here a difficulty presents itself. If the philosopher concerns himself, not only with the permanent foundations of existence, but also with the dynamic and the vital, not considered in the abstract, but as actually *experienced* by us, he will open the door to all sorts of possibilities that he may well find disturbing. For it will soon appear that in this wider field the functions of intuition and imagination will assume more importance than that of formal logical thinking, in which he is accustomed to place his trust.<sup>6</sup>

Yet only by making proper use of these powers can the mind grasp the character of the changing. To the degree that our attention is concentrated upon the living flow of events we are necessarily concerned with a complex of concrete and rapidly changing manifestations that can never be fully analysed. We can do justice to it only by a process of empathy, or imaginative projection, which has no place in the accepted technique of philosophical investigation.

Moreover, since we are here closely concerned with the qualitative, our emotional nature (for reasons given earlier in this chapter) will also be fully involved. And 'is again will constitute a challenge to the more conventional philosopher's assumptions. For like his colleagues in the scientific field, he will very likely be disinclined to admit that in certain regions of experience feeling is an essential condition for the apprehension of truth.

In the light of the principles of organic thinking the intellectualistic and the vitalistic conceptions of philosophy can be satisfactorily reconciled. It can be shown that the Aristotelian and the Non-Aristotelian approaches to knowledge are not so irreconcilable as may superficially appear. But the discussion of this important and interesting question belongs to a later stage in our enquiry.

### 6. *Conclusion*

Our investigation has revealed the fact that the more closely concerned anyone becomes with the theoretical approach to experience, whether in the field of science or philosophy, the more difficult it will be for him to come to terms with the complementary approach through identification and sympathy. And of course the situation will be reversed in the case of the person for whom emotional satisfaction is the supreme thing in life. Further, since we all of us, even if we are not extremists, have a natural bias in one of these two directions it is plain that we are confronted with the problem of balancing the components of thought and feeling within our own beings.

How is this to be achieved? With this we pass from negative considerations to an examination of the problem of synthesis in its positive aspect. And our first concern must be to gain as clear an understanding as possible of the creative functions of the heart and the mind in relating us to reality. In the next chapter I consider the first.

## CHAPTER IV

# THE CREATIVE ASPECT OF FEELING

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### 1. *The Function of Sympathy*

SINCE OUR MAJOR problem in the present epoch is that of dealing with the difficulties we have brought upon ourselves by excessive rationalization, it is only appropriate that a great deal of attention should be given to it by our psychologists. A formidable challenge to our composure has been presented to us from out of the depths of the 'Unconscious', and the stability of our civilization depends upon how successful we are in adjusting ourselves to it. Highly expert in the field of technics, we are discovering to our dismay that in the realm of emotional response we remain only too often childish and undeveloped personalities.

In considering the nature of a person's consciousness we have first to take account of its range. I have already suggested that the potential extent of man's emotional responsiveness is to all extents and purposes infinite. Actually his sympathies may be extremely restricted, but there is latent somewhere within him the power of relating himself vitally to every manifestation of existence. If he is still indifferent to certain phenomena it is only because his feelings have not yet been aroused in respect to them. He is usually, of course, so oppressed and conditioned by circumstances—not to speak of his psychological inhibitions—that he has little freedom to increase the sweep of his emotional expansion. And in any case it would take an almost unimaginable period to explore all the manifold aspects of the universe which sympathy can render accessible to the soul. Yet the principle holds that within each of us is enshrined the latent possibility of altogether comprehensive responsiveness. And the person who remains emotionally 'open', generously prepared to give himself up to whatever experiences life may offer him, is acknowledging this universality, even if he is actually obliged to live externally in severely circumscribed conditions.

The point to be emphasized is that it is the factor of sympathy and not that of understanding which really determines the sweep of the individual's vision. One may describe the situation by saying that it is sympathy alone that provides him with the building material for his thinking. If we analyse the limitations of those minds which, although the field of their operation is extensive, yet betray an indifference to certain aspects of knowledge, we find always that a defective power of emotional identification is revealed. What else is it that causes otherwise imaginative thinkers to undervalue the significance of mysticism, adopt a censorious attitude to those afflicted by sexual perversions, manifest an insensitiveness to the aesthetic, despise intuition, embrace narrowly nationalistic ideals, or cling obstinately to some sectarian form of religion? Surely, nothing else but a failure in empathy.

I must explain the meaning that I attach to this term. There can be no doubt that if we establish a sympathetic attitude towards anything and permit it to disclose its nature to us freely without erecting any psychological barriers to limit the impression it is making upon us we are accorded a deeper understanding of its character than if we observed it, however intently, in a detached and external fashion. Further, although on a more primitive level this process may entail 'identification' in the negative mode, in that our sense of our own individuality is for the time being lost, it is undoubtedly possible on a higher level to combine this surrender to what is before one both with an uninterrupted realization of one's own identity and with an alert and critical attitude towards it—a state of mind which the Germans aptly describe as '*mitfühlung*'. While finally it must be affirmed that this transition from an ego-centric to a heterocentric evaluation of the phenomenon, if carried far enough, culminates in the purely mystical realization that self and not-self are in essence one. But this is a disclosure that awaits us only at the end of the road. The point I want to establish at the moment is that knowledge acquires a deep and revealing character for us only through the association of cognition with love.

Further, it is difficult not to conclude that the range of sympathy that a particular person is capable of manifesting affords a more significant indication of his spiritual development than does his capacity for systematic thought. The really inclusive attitude is

always to be treated with serious respect, since it means that the person concerned has liberated himself from those emotional fixations that previously limited his free responsiveness to the demands of life.

And here we have to take account of the important fact that the function of thought, so far as it is active in the discursive mode, is to organize the material that has accumulated as the result of concentrating the attention on a particular region of existence. Rationalization, although an essential activity for ensuring command over experience, is a secondary process only. For it is sympathy that provides us with the material on which the intellect gets to work. The most that the mind can do is to ensure that such knowledge that we happen to possess in any particular phase of our development is reduced to intelligible order. But its content is constantly changing in accordance with the way in which our responsiveness to externals is modified. Thus, a man may slowly or suddenly awaken to the significance of humanitarianism, beauty or religion, and find himself living as a result in a different 'world' from that which he inhabited before. And if he is in a healthy state of mind he will address himself spontaneously to the task of examining the principles by which it is determined, the laws according to which it appears to be built.

Intellectual power is here quite a subordinate consideration. A properly trained mind will competently reduce to order any body of findings, whether it is a question of defending the claims of bourgeois morality, developing a system of philosophy, elucidating the principles of a particular psychological school, planning an advertising campaign, or working out the implications of a sociological scheme. But it will not be able to contribute in any direct fashion to raising the level of the consciousness the contents of which are thus being systematized. The point is important, since at a later stage in our investigation we shall have to consider the significance of succeeding levels of awareness, in respect of the degree to which the person concerned is becoming emancipated from the influence upon his organism of physical matter.

Further, emotion has a powerful function, not only in increasing our responsiveness to the countless manifestations that are presented to us in the world of our sense experience, but also in awakening us to the reality of unseen spheres of being. It is primarily because our

feelings have been stirred that we begin to accord significance to the realm of the supraphysical. Before everything, it is faith and love that open the door to an influx of spiritual life from the Within. The purely intellectual investigator of psychical phenomena cannot in the nature of the case get very far, for he lacks that emotional dynamism that alone can carry him effectively into the field of the supersensible. He remains always sceptical and ultra-critical, destined to remain all the time only on the periphery of really significant knowledge in this realm. So far, of course, as psychical phenomena can legitimately be dealt with from the scientific angle, his researches are of much value. But since he lacks the basic and child-like capacity for spiritual receptivity, deeper knowledge of the Unseen remains inaccessible to him.

## 2. *The Epistemological Problem*

Valid knowledge, then, depends upon the free expression of the emotional nature. This principle is so fundamental that before proceeding further we must examine its implications carefully.

Through our physical senses we become aware of a world of colours, shapes, sounds, tastes, odours, temperature, mass and movement. Moreover, most of these manifestations are normally experienced by us in conjunction. By a 'dog', for instance, we mean a collection of qualities that appear habitually together, so that wherever the animal may be its weight, bark, shape, colour, bite and smell are to be encountered at the same spot. The smile of the Cheshire Cat that remained after the rest of the animal had disappeared was rightly regarded by Alice as a phenomenon of a very special type! For the coincidence at one point in space and time of manifestations that affect our different senses is rightly regarded by us as significant. While we cannot be sure of the existence of anything that we have only seen, heard or felt—particularly for brief periods—we are more fully convinced of its reality when our sight and hearing are appealed to at one and the same time. And such is the basic materiality of our outlook that if we can actually *touch* what is before us our conviction of its reality becomes very strong indeed.

To what extent do the impressions that we thus receive through



our senses correspond to external realities? This is, of course, the classic problem of epistemology, regarding which philosophers have disputed with one another throughout the centuries. Although the issues involved are highly technical, we shall at least be pretty safe in concluding that a good many of the characteristics that we unreflectingly assign to objects outside ourselves have really been produced by the activity of our own organisms. That is to say, we see as 'red', taste as 'bitter', experience as 'heavy' external realities that do not in themselves possess these qualities. As a result of a process over which we have no control whatever and of which we are quite unconscious, we have translated certain incoming messages into our own private codes.

How far this process of subjective conditioning goes, we have no reliable means of knowing. It may even be the case that, as some philosophers have concluded, it is *we* who contribute to the picture the fundamental categories of space and time. If this is indeed true, the reality to which we thus stand in relation remains entirely inconceivable by our minds.

Yet it does not follow that we are altogether cut off from it. For we have to allow for the important principle that what we directly experience, conditioned as it is by the peculiar activity of our psycho-physical organisms, does at least *correspond* in a deep way with what is outside us. Although the pictures that appear before our mental eye may be deceptive in themselves it is difficult to resist the conclusion that *through* them we establish a living contact with external realities. The analogy is with the navigator of a ship who is able to gain a correct impression of the coast-line he is approaching because the images on his radar screen indicate correctly its contours. Only, in the case of man's nervous and mental mechanism we have to believe that the actual images that are formed in the mind convey much more fully the vitality and richness of the realities with which contact has been established.

Further, one must bear in mind that it is possible for a minority who have attained to an advanced stage of spiritual development to experience the outer world on rare occasions not phenomenally, but directly or noumenally. What they then perceive and feel is naturally beyond their power of description. But only the very unimaginative will conclude that because the knowledge that is given to them

in such high moments is not communicable in ordinary terms it is therefore to be dismissed as illusory.

In affirming that the objects with which we make contact through our senses are 'real' we are asserting that they are something more than ideas, in that they possess 'substance'. What meaning are we to attach to this term?

There are two basic and distinct senses in which the expression can be used. The first of these is logical, and is exemplified by Aristotle's definition of substance as 'that which has predicates and is not predicated by anything else'. We are here clearly concerned with a relationship existing in the world of thought, the entity under consideration being of an essentially metaphysical nature—the idea of a triangle, for instance. But we can also speak of 'substance' when we intend to refer to that incognizable something which underlies ('stands under') all physical manifestations. Not matter itself (whatever that may be), but the *basis* of those qualities of things that are perceived by the physical senses. When we say that some project has 'come into being', or that an idea has been 'actualized', we mean that it has been precipitated into the realm of the physically existent, that it has 'acquired substance'. And the 'things' or 'objects' with which we have to deal when this transition has been accomplished are endowed with a character that ideas as such can never possess. What was formerly only imagined or conceived has now become a 'reality'.

But it will be evident that the act of creation involved is only secondary in character. The capacities of man in the field of action are limited to manipulating and re-combining physical elements that he already finds in existence. So on a deeper level we are brought to consider the notion of 'universal substance', that which for the religious thinker is an externalization of the being of God, and is to be regarded as the feminine complement of the masculine Logos, or Creative Word. And for the illuminated mystic the two are one.

No system of philosophy has any claim to profundity if it fails to take due account of the significance of substance as thus conceived. There is no question of denying that the concepts developed by the idealists are impressive. Consciousness is basic. We have to admit that the key position is occupied by the knower, for whom in the last resort the whole system of things exists. And it is also true that

our spiritual growth can legitimately be thought of as a gradual process of liberation from limited states of awareness, until at last complete emancipation is attained. Further, it is very suggestive to think of the history of this and other worlds as an immensely complicated process of dialectic whereby the Absolute in some way dramatizes Its eternal ideas in time—or however one likes to put it.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, as suggested earlier, a deep instinct should tell us that the material can never be completely sublimated into the mental. However much meaning and significance we come to discover in what we find outside ourselves, it remains true that the realm within which we discern them is a reality which is no less important than that of consciousness itself. Both subjective and objective are given us as ultimate facts of experience, and it is only prudent to take the view that they will both have to be included in any synthesis to which we finally attain.

How, we must now ask, can we establish a really valid relationship with the actual being of objects? It should be evident in the first place that the intellect by itself is inadequate to this task. The contemplation of ideas does not by itself ensure any experience of *being*. All it guarantees is the recognition that certain forms can be identified, and that they stand in different relations to one another. But from the point of view of the purely intellectual observer it is quite irrelevant whether the forms in question exist in an embodied state, or on the plane of the imagination alone. In other words, he is dealing only with the possible, and not with the actual. This may be illustrated by the fact that, scientists of a philosophical bent have recognized, the relations discovered by investigators in the field of physics would remain equally valid whether the observer was presented with a 'real' or a merely conceived world. Or to put it differently, our scientific knowledge as such does not provide us with any proof that the world we are studying actually exists: *that* is a problem for the metaphysicians!

Further, due account should be taken of the fact that if scepticism in this field be pushed too far the individual will cut himself off from external realities in the most disabling fashion. If as a result of this attitude of mind 'knowledge' is restricted to acquaintance with phenomena alone, then we are condemned to living in a world of unintelligible phantasms only, and all our deeper values inevitably

lose their authority for us. For unless the emotional nature is brought into full manifestation in our transactions with the external world, that world fails to be invested with a substantial and convincing character. The mind, lacking the support of the feelings, will occupy itself with examining in great detail the nature of what is presented to it, will evolve all sorts of theories of a subtle and elaborate type—and be left in the end with inconclusive and negative results. All that can be achieved on this plane is intellectual dissection. The object is considered from various angles and the data thus acquired are carefully analysed and correlated. But the price paid for this scrupulous activity by the investigator is that in the process he undermines his relation to the object *as such*. For he vitiates his experience of it in its wholeness as a distinct and existent entity. And it is only through the awakening of emotional response that this condition of mind can be corrected.

The significance of response to the *actual* should be properly understood. We are impressed by the deliverances of our senses because we realize that what could have been merely a possibility, an idea or a dream has been really brought into manifestation in the space-time realm. It is there before us, and affords a legitimate reason for wonder and awe. This is the poetic, or mystical approach to existence, and it is surely deeper than that of the thinker who is interested primarily in the structure of objects, the way they work, and the external relations into which they enter. For it involves the contemplation of pure being. Not how, but *that*, things are!<sup>2</sup> This for the imaginative beholder is the overpowering element in the experience.

The importance of this attitude lies in the fact that it involves either an overt or an implicit acknowledgment of the principle of cosmic creation. The spectator feels that he is faced with manifestations that it is utterly beyond our limited human power either to initiate or maintain. He realizes, in fact, that he is in the presence of a great and holy mystery of which he has only the most limited understanding. But only, of course, if he is a true poet or mystic. The tendency of the ordinary unilluminated student of natural phenomena is to take them unreflectively as given, although not without a certain appreciation of their aesthetic appeal, and then to proceed to submit their characteristics to analysis.

Further, any true realization of the *being* of objects is directly connected with the individual's sense of his own being as a distinct and existent entity. It is because I know that I am that I acknowledge the reality of that which is before me. A deepened inwardness makes inevitably for a more profound recognition of the reality that is presented to us through the medium of external appearances. Conversely, there is a significant connection between a merely intellectualistic and phenomenistic attitude towards the external world and a condition of interior deprivation and impoverishment. Until one has become aware of one's inner reality one cannot hope to experience with any compulsion the realities that lie outside oneself.

How, we must now ask, is experience of being to be achieved? It is plain in the first place that the exercise of our sensory faculties alone will not ensure this identification. Of course we need in the first place to be properly aware of the object into the nature of which we are thus seeking to penetrate; that is an essential condition of the undertaking. But a merely minimal sensory registration of its characteristics serves simply to bring it into correct focus. And even if we carry the process further and experience it strongly in a sensationalistic fashion, as do people with a certain type of psychological constitution, we shall still remain confined within the realm of outer appearances. Somehow we must *become* that with which we are seeking to establish a relation.

In such vital cognition the body, and the subconscious processes so intimately associated with it, lay a decisive part. Here lies the significance of that dark, primitive, 'plexial' and emotional mode of knowing that is of the blood rather than of the brain, and the nature of which was so powerfully conveyed by the late D. H. Lawrence. One can easily see that when it comes to appreciating fully the qualitative aspect of objects the organism as a whole must play its part in the process of apprehension, rendering possible for the individual an order of experience that would otherwise be inaccessible to him.

It is of significance in this connection that our mental processes are strongly affected by our clothes and postures. If we are sensitive to this bodily situation we can induce very definite states of mind by attiring ourselves in different garments and assuming the appropriate

attitudes. This every good actor realizes. The principle involved is that we identify ourselves with a particular condition of being by associating ourselves as closely as possible with the material conditions that are relevant to it, thus passing into the interior through the exterior. This affords yet another indication of the significance of matter as a medium for relating ourselves to reality.

Further, although it may not be so very obvious that the body plays an important part in the process of emotionally apprehending truth, no one can fail to perceive that it exercises a vital function in aiding us to express it. Singing, oratory and acting achieve potency only when the ideas that the individual is seeking to communicate are energized and substantialized by the participation of the physical organism. The intellectual component is synthesized with the emotional, which finds expression in all sorts of bodily gestures and postures. In particular, the spiritual power of the voice depends directly upon the degree to which there is reflected in its tones and cadences the activity of the somatic organs—the heart, the bowels, the lungs—while there must also be considered, of course, the discharges of the endocrine glands. So there are serious grounds for the traditional view that really compulsive statements can only be made to us verbally by such persons as the master, the hierophant, or the inspired poet who is declaiming his verses to us. For the rhythms that are thus produced, instead of figuring as mere vocal embellishments of a message that would be equally intelligible when communicated in a written form, actually, one must believe, introduce into the complex elements that are indispensable for the realization of the truths that are being expounded. In a word, we find once again that the pathway to the Real leads us upwards through, and not in dissociation from, the material.

Our most profound experience of what is before us is acquired through the 'heart'. A faith, or intuition, impels us to acknowledge on a deep level realities the existence of which cannot be proved in any strict sense. One might say that an invisible realm of being that is veiled from us by appearances acts upon us by producing within us a conviction that the intellect alone cannot establish. The principle by which we are persuaded is ontological and not rational in character.

Through a process of identification that is in its essence mystical

we place ourselves in communion with what we find outside ourselves, and as a result enlarge the content of our own being. We become, in this particular mode, something more than what we were before, participating in a life that is wider than our own. We 'know' objects and people in a far more complete sense than does the empiricist who coolly observes, or inspects, their external characteristics. In a measure, at least, the life-denying barrier between subjective and objective is transcended, and we see all things around us as creations of the Great Spirit. Not that we necessarily experience this with what may be called transcendental intensity—that is for a highly endowed minority alone. But we do perceive that we are in touch, through the veil of sense, with sustaining realities. However perplexing the appearances presented to us by the outer physical world, we are at least assured that it is something more than a complicated display of imagery with nothing substantial in the background to support it.

To what are we thus relating ourselves? The view I would advance is that through the medium of the sensory the observer is contemplating primarily an *idea* which is mental in character. But he is contemplating it in an embodied state. And this means that on the one hand he is cognizing the idea in question on the mental plane as an immaterial form, and that on the other he is experiencing something that is spiritually of much greater significance than an *idea per se*—an idea that has achieved actuality through the association of the mental with the material.

Finally, a true metaphysical experience of the object involves a very close synthesis between these two ways of responding to it. The individual relates himself to what is before him in the dual modes of wisdom and love. Through the activity of his intellect he grasps its intelligible aspect, and at the same time in the mode of love he identifies himself with its being. Thereby he is preserved on the one hand from that confusion and uncertainty that attends all purely sensationalistic experience, and on the other from a merely formal understanding of its characteristics.

In other words, his vision acquires a synthetic quality. And this achievement, again, is only possible because he has succeeded to a certain degree in harmonizing the functions of thinking and feeling within the sphere of his own inner being. It becomes evident,

therefore, that integration must not be conceived of as being a psychological process alone, for it is accomplished at one and the same time both in the subjective and the objective realms.

### 3. *Warp and Weft*

Up to this point we have been considering only the function of feeling in bringing the individual into a living and dynamic relation with the objects and people which he finds outside himself. But it is now necessary to take account also of another expression of man's emotional life: the unfolding of his experience as a unique being with his own personal history.

Our relation to the external world presents two fundamental aspects. We can concern ourselves with knowledge so far as it has a general character, or so far as it has significance only for ourselves as individuals. These two fields of experience may be described as the cosmic and the personal. Let us see how this works out.

First of all, it should be clear that *all* our knowledge is in the first instance personal and 'private'. If fifty people are together watching a display of fireworks, each will receive an individual impression from it that will be the occasion of an idea, or ideas, within his or her own head. Or again, both my indigestion and yours are personal experiences, known to us directly, and by us alone. Nor is any fundamental difference involved if it is a question instead of taking a reading with a scientific instrument; for only I see what I see, or hear what I hear. And even if mechanical devices are contrived to take readings for us, and still further devices to record what *they* report, the series will always wind up with a person with a particular kind of image in his mind. The ultimate basis of science is secret, subjective and personal. In the final phase there is no way of keeping metaphysics out of the story—disappointing as this conclusion may be to many men of science.

But we are not only observers of phenomena, but intelligent beings with an impulse to share our experience with others. Hence we give things names—in other words, devise schemes of classification. And this means in the last resort that we try to define the fields in which our individual experiences can be found to overlap. Thus although your and my knowledge of a penny cannot in the nature



of the case be exactly identical (if only because it is physically impossible for us both to inspect it while occupying the same point in space), they are sufficiently similar to make possible practical transactions between us in respect to it. Extend this principle and it will easily be seen that the whole field of our collective experience consists of those concepts that represent the respects in which our individual ideas can be found to coincide with one another.

So we arrive at a realm of ideas that have a collective as well as an individual significance, that are (ideally at least) 'true for all observers'. Not only 'this for me', but this for all normal and healthy minds. The contents of any reliable encyclopaedia afford an example of this pooling of individual experiences. The precise, pedestrian and colourless particulars it provides regarding Notre Dame, chemistry, the history of Brazil, aviation or what you will are of general and not merely of particular significance, and are rendered available to us all through a common agreement respecting the connotation of certain terms. The word 'architrave', for example, represents the lowest common factor in the experience of architraves enjoyed by people collectively.

We have of course in this matter to reckon with different levels of reliability. Established scientific knowledge passes by stages into supposition and speculation. But the fundamental principle entailed remains the same: we are engaged with concepts that both enable us to gain a picture of the world as a whole, and to communicate with one another. We are concerned with the nature, as far as we can understand it, of the Objective. This, as we saw in an earlier chapter, means the acknowledgement of similar sensations (fire burns for everybody, etc.), of physical laws that are universal in their application, of certain logical principles to which we must all have recourse if we wish to explain anything, and of a mass of facts that have been discovered by historical and scientific investigation.

Incarnation, therefore, implies a dual relation to a great world of physical manifestation. In the first place the individual experiences things directly and immediately as they present themselves to him alone in a way that is determined by his unique personal history. And in the second place he considers them so far as his experiences can be shared with other people. Of course the range of his 'personal' experience is extended to include knowledge that reaches him at

second-hand, but in this field also the distinction remains valid between his individual reactions to impressions and that which is valid for all.

Here two main types of emphasis disclose themselves. On the one hand we find that the scientific thinker is by nature and training so sensitive to the universal, or cosmic, aspect of knowledge that he only too easily falls into the error of concluding that what is true 'for all observers' is more 'real' than what is true for each of us individually. This is of course a crude philosophical misconception, since it makes no allowance for the fact that that 'universe of science' on which he is setting such a high value exists only for human observers who have interrogated Nature for centuries with intelligence and persistence.<sup>3</sup> Further, this view of the matter leaves entirely out of account the significance of the experience of persons as such—that is to say, of people as far as they are unique.

But in justice to the scientist one must recognize that at the root of his concern with abstract and impersonal knowledge and his reverence for established facts there lies what really amounts to a mystical realization of the significance of *that which is*, independently of our personal hopes, enthusiasms, suppositions and fears, and which we of ourselves are incapable of bringing into existence. In other words, he concludes that our individual impressions of objects would not coincide to the extent that they do unless they entailed a common response to objective realities.

Moreover, he is not merely concerned to assemble a vast collection of properly observed and established facts, but to investigate the way in which they are connected together as elements in a great cosmic system. He thus confronts the introvert and the escapist, not only with obstinately existing individual manifestations, but with an extended scheme of relations to which he must sooner or latter accommodate himself. In a word, he reveals Man as brought forth within and conditioned by Nature, imposing upon him thereby a sobering discipline, while at the same time stimulating his intellectual faculties.

At the other extreme we find the artists, the mystics, the poets and the existentialists who are concerned before everything with the significance of personal and inward experience. What interests them primarily is not the general scheme of things, but the way in which

the individual relates himself to both interior and exterior realities. Thus in one direction each of us is called upon to understand his inward and personal relation to the Source of his being and activity. Hence as his consciousness deepens he becomes increasingly engaged with problems of a mystical character relating to regeneration, unity with the Divine, inspiration from the Within, and the unfoldment of his inner being.

On the other hand in the external realm what is of particular moment to him is his individual experience of the concrete manifestations that are presented to him. And this means that he is concerned with an aspect of experience which is by definition excluded from the field of scientific investigation, while at the same time it is of paramount interest, both to the artist and to the type of mystic who is particularly responsive to *objective* disclosures of spiritual reality.

It will be obvious that both these major approaches to knowledge have the most serious claims to validity. And we may describe the situation by saying that they represent the Warp and the Weft of our human experience. In other words, we have to do with a universe which is in one aspect the same for all, but which at the same time is traversed by myriads of souls, each in accordance with the character of his own particular life pattern.

At each point in his journey the individual will be called upon to come to terms with actualities that all but the neurotic and the insane will feel themselves bound to acknowledge. But he will not only be confronted with a very limited selection from the total range of facts that exist in the objective realm, but confronted with them in a sequence that is experienced by him alone. And this will naturally have a strong effect upon his psychology and invest his personality with a unique character. We thus meet with the interesting and suggestive notion that although we are so constituted that we are capable of grasping the nature of cosmic (or universally accepted) knowledge, our fate is such that our personal acquaintance with the world must of necessity be highly individualized—whereby a check is continually being imposed upon the sovereignty of scientific and philosophical thought.

What is behind this insistent impulse to explore and express one's personal relation to the world? With this we become engaged with

a principle that has deep mystical implications—that of entelechy. The development of an organism can be considered from the genetic or causal standpoint, in which case it is a question of determining the character of the forces active in the past that have brought it into being. A plant, for instance, may be thought of as an effect of the combined activity of potencies in the seed, sunlight, water, chemicals, and so on. Or the emphasis may be laid instead upon its ultimate character, upon that which will disclose itself when the process of its growth is completed and its potentiality realized. In this case it is a question of taking account of formal and final, instead of efficient and material, causes.

Now in the case of a human being this factor of perfection assumes very great significance. For if we have succeeded in emancipating ourselves from materialism we cannot but perceive that what in religious language is described as the unfolding of the spiritual nature involves us with very deep mysteries. A soul comes into manifestation and at once becomes engaged in a long and obstinate struggle to identify itself with an inner principle within its being—with its true and interior self, that self, which reflects in a unique fashion the nature of the Divine Being of which it is (according to how one looks at the question) an aspect, emanation or creation.

We thus meet with the interesting fact that the standard, or norm, in relation to which the lesser, incarnated self is seeking to orient itself has a purely transcendental character. 'Be your true self' can only mean: try to conform increasingly to a personal ideal the character of which can only be understood, stage by stage, by the exercise of intuition, and as the outcome of aspiration, dedication and prayer. Of course it is a long time before the individual conceives of the situation in such terms, but it is true to say that even in an early phase of his awakening he has a vague and confused notion of some higher potentiality within his being that it is incumbent upon him to realize.

It will further be evident that the principles upon which objects are classified from the 'cosmic' standpoint are of a relatively superficial order. For they are arrived at only as the result of first elaborating some hypothesis and then making physical investigations in order to determine how far it can be fruitfully applied. In other words, the procedure is empirical only. The application of the

technique does of course call for much patience and discipline, but it obviously does not entail such deep spiritual adaptations as that demanded for the attainment of self-knowledge in the more profound sense of the term. Except in the case of the major achievements of the scientific imagination, which must always be excepted, it is a matter for the most part of straightforward observation and analysis, without there being any obligation entailed to raise the consciousness above the phenomenal plane.

To return to the question of the individual's personal pattern, it is plain that emotion must necessarily play an important part in determining its character. For our strongest feelings are always aroused by experiences that we have 'lived through'. Not only are they the outcome of direct contact with concrete realities, which normally have a powerful effect upon us, but they are modified and reinforced by other experiences that we have undergone earlier in our lives. We have already noted the psychological significance of the fact that we each meet with elements in the universal scheme in accordance with an individual sequence. So what it comes to is that what most vitally and intimately concerns us all are the elements in that continually unfolding process of contact with externals which we describe as our 'life pattern'. And it is along this path alone that we most deeply live.

Again, so far as science is concerned with the material basis of our existence it is occupied with a less significant realm of experience than that into which we enter by giving expression to ourselves as persons. The reason is plain. Scientific knowledge relates to such matters as composition, mechanism, structure and causal relations. Science can give us an account of the food we eat, the chemical processes at work in our bodies, or of the functioning of the brain and the nervous system. Going further, it can, but with far less certainty, classify the *types* of psychological attitudes and reactions that are characteristic of human beings. But it can never touch the actual nerve of our existence, which is to be found in the infinitely complex and plastic ways in which each and all of us make use of the organisms the characteristics of which science has thus classified. In respect of this higher order of activity the scientist is, in fact, in the situation of the technician who understands the mechanism of a telephone, considered apart from the limitless range and style of the conversa-

tions that can be carried on with its aid, or that of a piano, irrespective of the different kinds of music that can be played by striking its keys.

What it comes to is that science provides us with a picture of the general conditions under which men and women express their natures. But individual manifestations as such, with all their variety and charm, fall outside the scope of its enquiries. The mark of a person is that he is endowed with the capacity for creating on the mental plane every sort of combination of ideas, and in a measure of giving them expression in the physical realm. That external world which is investigated so thoroughly by the scientist has, therefore, to be thought of as providing the raw material for the imaginative creations of the human spirit. Although scientific knowledge is of fascinating interest, it is a foundation only for something higher than itself.

Yet one must again insist that no labour can be more impressive and constructive than that of the scientific investigator who plays his individual part in building up our picture of that grand elemental scheme of things which is the cosmic stage for the unfolding of our human drama. For it is science alone that can furnish us, through the vastness of the vistas that it opens up to us, with the basic compensating factor for that concern with the 'personal' which can all too easily degenerate into self-indulgence, vanity and escapism.

Finally, we meet with the interesting fact that a very close connection discloses itself between the activity of the individual in the 'weft' and his activity in the 'warp' dimension. For to the degree that he succeeds in unifying his being inwardly—and 'personal development' is nothing else but a process of perfecting the integration between the different elements in one's nature—he will manifest an improved capacity for responding to that general pattern of things which is constituted by established universal knowledge and, in the human sphere, community. And at the same time any serious concern with these two factors will work backwards upon his soul by clarifying and uplifting his personal life.

#### *4. Emotion and Thought*

My aim in the foregoing has been to suggest that our feelings

exercise a basic function by carrying us out of the sphere of subjectivism and intellectualism into association with an objective world outside ourselves. The function of creative emotional response (we are not here considering negative manifestations) is to bring us into a living rapport with the objects with which we have established contact. And this is evidently a great advance upon the bare cognizing of their existence.

I have further tried to bring out the significance of the fact that feeling is a basic element in that highly individualized process whereby each human soul follows a unique path in traversing a particular region of the universe in accordance with what religious thinkers describe as its destiny. But we have also seen that in respect of both these types of adaptation a serious danger presents itself of succumbing to uncriticized and wrongly evaluated emotional influences. Hence it is essential in order to complete our picture of the soul's relation to the outer world that we should consider carefully the part played by the intellect in organizing and clarifying our experiences.

To this important theme I address myself in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NATURE OF THOUGHT

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MY USE OF the terms 'mind' and 'mental' in what follows calls for a word of explanation. We all of course realize today that the functions of consciousness are not exhausted by our rational activity. For it is at work most of the time on several planes, according to the closeness of its association with bodily processes. To speak of a person's 'mind', therefore, as if it existed in independence of the rest of his organism is to be guilty of an inexcusable resort to abstraction. As remarked earlier, pure thought, since it is tinged always by a certain amount of feeling, is not an element in our experience, any more than is pure emotion. Hence when I refer in the course of my exposition to 'the mind', 'reason', 'the intellect', and so on, I shall do so with a due recognition of this fact. And in describing man's mental life I shall make my choice of terms according to the character of the situation of which I am trying to give an account.

#### 1. *The Function of the Intellect*

In our essence we are rational beings. We are endowed with the capacity for cognizing and combining mental relationships (or ideas) in complete freedom, unconditioned by any external influences to which we may be subjected. This is our birthright, and the fact that as a result of different kinds of psychological inhibition we actually manifest this condition only to a limited degree is of incidental significance only. For the distinctive mark of mental life in its higher aspect is that it is determined only by a transcendental principle that cannot be derived from the character of our biological organisms.

To the degree that we are not afflicted, we are capable of arranging ideas in every sort of pattern and emancipating ourselves from the automatisms to which we are all so fatally subject. Freud, Marx and the behaviourists have demonstrated that we are to a discon-



certing degree conditioned beings, and this depressing fact must be properly faced. But we are also children of the Father, and this means that we have the seeds of liberation within us. And after all, is not the most encouraging element in modern democracy the emphasis that is laid by enlightened educators upon man's obligation to judge everything for himself?

We have seen earlier that when our mental freedom is expressed we find that the distinctive function of the intellect lies in its power of first of all analysing the character of ideas and their combinations, whether existing on the mental plane or in an embodied form, and then of creating new arrangements in this field by the exercise of the imagination. On the more simple level we take note of similarities without making any particular effort to do so. But if we are so inclined we can explore differences and resemblances in all sorts of fields, thus becoming in our measure scientists, historians, philosophers or theologians. Further, we can consider other ideas that are not given expression in the external world at all—such as conceptions that are met with in the field of pure mathematics, or those imagined by physicists as providing an explanation of the behaviour of material particles. And finally we can create new systems of mental relationships in accordance with our imaginative power.

Now some psychological considerations. Pure mental activity makes for a condition of calm. It is not the most profound form of peace that we can experience, since one element in our nature remains dormant. And it certainly cannot be described as 'god-like'. But it is very satisfying to certain temperaments, and it does at least ensure a brief escape from the strains and uncertainties of our more accustomed existence. One might describe it as a condition of disengagement from life, as compared with a true state of transcendence. But unless we enter into it periodically we cannot properly organize our experience.

Again, so far as we are dealing with them from the purely intellectual standpoint all experiences, without exception, are placed on the same level. In other words, we consider objects in as complete as possible dissociation from any emotions that they may arouse either within ourselves or within anyone else. Our attitude is strictly scientific, clinical, detached. And we record our findings in the same impersonal spirit. Whether we are dealing with a virus, the

population of Labrador, the properties of solids, or the technique of psychical research it is for us, as far as this particular approach to experience is concerned, the same thing. The part we are playing is that of the observant and reflective spectator who is located—for the time being, at least—above the flux of material and biological existence.

The next point is that when we become deeply absorbed in the contemplation of ideas we lose all sense of the passage of objective, or 'clock', time. Of this the thinker is oblivious. Yet he has not altogether transcended the time process, since he is involved with *internal* time, which might be defined as the limitation upon instantaneous apprehension that is imposed upon us by the obligation to consider ideas in sequence.

In our cogitations we have to proceed by manipulating ideas serially. Hence we are subject to a sort of logical equivalent of the passage in the physical realm from one point to another. But a contrast to 'clock' time is entailed, since the process is very elastic—so that while on the most pedestrian plane we grope, re-consider and experiment painfully, we can on occasion think in a truly comprehensive mode, grasping even rich and complicated conceptions in their entirety, as, it is reported, did Mozart on a still higher level when he conceived of a whole symphony in one intense act of consciousness. And this certainly suggests that in his inner, deeper nature man is not a time-creature at all, but a potential god who is capable of selecting and combining ideas forever in freedom.

Now as to the relation of the mind to the outer world. It can be seen that it exercises a remarkable function in that it is active in an intermediate zone mid-way, as it were, between the mysterious inmost spirit of the individual and the universe in which he is striving to express himself. There is a transcendental adytum in the soul into which we cannot hope to penetrate directly, although if we are mystically-minded we try to come into a closer relation with it in our contemplative exercises. On a more simple and familiar level we experience a reflection of it in the subconscious sense we all possess of our own inner being. I know that I exist, and the self of which I am thus aware lies in some way behind my thinking, my feeling and my willing, the function of which is to express its nature.

Then outside myself there lies an illimitable region of what we

call 'matter'. Between them is an immaterial and mental sphere of being in which ideas are evoked, distinguished, and connected with one another. And its location (if one may use such a term) is such that it must provide the key to the relation between the subjective and the objective realms of existence.

More precisely, what is involved is this. In occupying itself with ideas the intellect is in one sense concerned only with subjective experience; for our thoughts can be described as 'goings-on' inside our own heads. But in another sense it is concerned with realities that have an objective, although a transcendental, existence—an important point that will receive attention in the next chapter. Further, still another factor is entailed, since ideas can be contemplated, either on the mental plane (as when we are surveying imaginary or theoretical possibilities) or as they exist in an embodied form as recognizable features of objects which have a physical existence.

In this last case what is entailed is that the intellect creates a bridge between the interior, subjective life of the individual and the realm of physical matter, thereby uniting two different orders of existence. For the mind has projected itself inside the object, and the object in its mental aspect by the same act appears within the mind. So there must be—as Plotinus long ago pointed out—a deep identity between them.

It should be noted, however, that the identification achieved by the self in the process of knowing is of a particular type. For since the operation involved is conducted on the mental plane this means that the observer, although from one point of view 'outside' himself, is from another entirely impersonal and detached. In other words, he is unaffected by the material characteristics of the object he is examining. It is this fact that enables him to be both disengaged and engaged at the same time.

This situation may be contrasted with that entailed when the projection takes place on the emotional plane. In discussing this process earlier we saw that what is involved, whether this identification is of a negative or of a positive type, is what might be described as a process of absorption in the object. It is characteristic of love that it 'loses itself' in that which it is adoring. But although a deeper movement of the spirit is entailed, the fact remains that the soul in thus passing outside itself has done so at the cost of losing touch with

that element in its being—the intellect—that ensures its freedom from conditioning by material influences, and which dwells always in calm, inner detachment from the things of sense.

Finally, we have to conclude that the activity of the mind on its higher levels of expression is essentially spiritual. In other words, a power is at work that is not derivable from either the material, the biological or the mental realms of being, and which reveals itself essentially in the unification of the different aspects of our experience. And it can fairly be said that it is the highest power known to us in our present state of consciousness.

## 2. *The Mind in Action*

Now to consider more closely the actual character of our mental operations. Through the activity of our senses we become aware of a vast, complicated, ever-changing realm of being which is at once fascinating, bewildering, threatening and sustaining in character. Unless we can somehow 'make sense' of it we are obviously lost. Here the function of the intellect comes into play. For it enables us to deal with our experience by reducing it to order. This sounds simple—even platitudinous—but if we look into the matter we find that the operation has some very important implications, particularly in the psychological realm.

Of course, certain images which appear in dreams, etc., might be considered as projections on to the psychic plane of ideas in the minds of discarnate beings. In such cases the content of the image and the content of the idea would be the same. But so far as images have to be considered as pictures which the human observer has the task of rendering intelligible they are in a different category.

The essence of the matter is this. There are some pictures that are presented to us through using our physical senses. There are others that appear before the eye of the imagination. But in each case material is offered us that it is the function of the intellect to clarify and interpret. Whether it is a question of discerning the formal elements in a physical or a psychic landscape, of meditating upon the proportions of an actual or a remembered temple, of making moves with real or imagined chess-men, in every case what is entailed is concern with ideal, or formal, factors that can be detached from the

imagery by which they are presented to us and contemplated in independence of it.

This process calls for careful attention. In studying any phenomenon the mind proceeds first of all to take account of those elements within it that can be considered apart from the immediate context in which they appear. To take a simple example: confronted with a square, green, wooden box, the intellect can as it chooses abstract from this phenomenon the squareness, greenness or woodenness involved. It is able to do this because it has previously taken note of these characteristics as exhibited in other objects—such as dice, grass or matches. So it is evidently concerned with phenomena that are to be met with in all sorts of connections, and at all sorts of times and places—in other words, that are very widely distributed.

Again, I look at a piece of stone, which is an object of sense experience, and is immediately present to me. I observe that it is triangular. But in so doing I transcend the plane of physical existence and contemplate something that in itself has no material characteristics. This is evident from the fact that it is not to be encountered anywhere *in particular* in the space-time realm. True, I detect triangularity in this particular stone, but it can also be observed in countless other objects and situations as well: in road signs, political alliances, hats, islands—and even, as some believe, within the being of God himself! In other words, I am considering *an idea*.

The point to note is that the very fact that the observer is capable of recognizing a particular form (or idea) means that he is able, if he so wishes, to detach it from the setting within which he observed it. This for the essential reason that the mark of all forms is that they are intelligible rather than sensible. Hence they necessarily possess a universal character. The formal is the separable. Anyone contemplating the identifiable features of an object is through that very fact engaged with elements that are *not* cognizable only at that particular place, and on that particular occasion. The mere fact that an intelligible idea has been identified implies that it can be met with elsewhere, reproduced (so far as technical considerations permit) within other objects, or contemplated directly apart from any question of giving it embodiment at all.

The next stage is obviously that of exploring the relations between

such ideas in every imaginable direction, and here the possibilities that are offered to a creative mind are almost limitless in their range. The vast body of knowledge that today exists in the realms of science, history and philosophy represents the fruits of man's activity on the intellectual plane, while it is obvious that his investigations in these fields are still only in their primary stage.

The capacity of the mind to relate ideas to one another with such facility and resourcefulness has excusably led the more enthusiastic type of rationalist to regard the intellect as a god-like faculty, in relation to which all the other powers of the soul enjoy only an inferior status. But this view cannot satisfy us. For although one must certainly allow that the powers of man's intelligence at their highest are little short of sublime, it is also true that in respect of the deeper elements in our human experience its activity remains ineffective without the co-operation of the emotional side of the nature. It may be of interest to see how this works out.

### 3. *The Problem of the Concrete*

It lies in the nature of the intellect that it is occupied with relations, and not with objects. The object as such eludes its grasp. For this there are two basic reasons. In the first place, as we have seen above, in concerning itself with the intelligible aspect of a thing the mind is engaged in a process of abstraction and thus placing itself in relation, not with that thing in particular, but with an idea which it embodies that can in most cases be met with in embodiment elsewhere, or contemplated directly on the mental plane. Identification with the actual object before us is achieved only through the activity of the emotional nature, impelling the individual to respond to the *being* of what is before him. Of this important principle we took note in the last chapter.

It follows that the contemplation of an idea, or principle, with full regard to the qualities of the material in which it is embodied, is a far richer experience than that of examining it on the mental plane alone. For two sides of the nature are thereby brought into expression in conjunction.

Nor is it only a question of inviting the mind to consider ideas in close association with sensory experience. For we have also to

reckon with the fact that the intellect can deal effectively with the relationships exhibited by actual concrete objects only to a limited degree.

The principle involved is easily enough understood. We have no difficulty in distinguishing the basic features possessed by objects of a simple type, such as a stone, a knife or a table. And as far as chemical and mechanical structures are concerned, there seems to be practically no limit to the ingenuity that can be displayed by the human intellect in analysing and designing them. When, however, it is called upon to deal with the behaviour of living organisms its control over the situation begins to weaken, and when it is presented with the higher manifestations of the human personality the inadequacy of its powers becomes only too evident. For it is now a question of grasping the character of a complex of subtle manifestations that can only be characterized with considerable difficulty and which, moreover, are for the most part in a state of constant change. The observer is confronted with the creative processes of life, which in the nature of the case cannot be formulated in purely scientific terms.

The consequence is that, to the degree that the mind can deal with the situation at all, it is obliged to have recourse to operations which are no longer strictly intellectual in character. For the nature of what is before one can be grasped, and then only partially, by the exercise of intuition rather than by systematic reasoning. It is a question of becoming sensitive to configurations and rhythms that cannot be analysed, but only *recognized*. Further, their character can only be conveyed by the technique of art, which consists, not in presenting the observer with abstractions but with concrete facts that are exhibited in subtle and revealing relationships that speak more directly to the soul.

Again, it is a significant fact that when the mind is focussed on this plane the emotional side of the nature is brought into full activity. For it is impossible either to apprehend, or express, what one is thus experiencing unless the feelings are given full play. Moreover, any statements, whether in the form of words, painting, sculpture, architecture or music, that are made on this plane call forth an emotional as well as an intellectual response in those to whom they are addressed.

There is also a further element to be considered: the difference

between the way in which the elements in a whole are related to one another in terms of intelligible order; and the way in which they are related in terms of their simple *conjunction*.<sup>1</sup> In the second case the effect produced on the higher level is aesthetic or spiritual, and it is quite distinct from that which is made upon us by purely formal configurations—although of course it may be presented to us in the closest association with them. In other words, we become concerned with the higher aspect of the organic—a theme which will be discussed in some detail in a later chapter.

Finally, account must be taken of the significance of the *symbol*. The mark of all symbolical forms that are possessed of a spiritual quality (as opposed to technical *signs*) is that they have both an intensive and an extensive character. In other words, some concrete image is presented to us which is suggestive of wide and deep meanings. Here also the merely intellectual is transcended, for although the mind may be engaged with an intelligible idea it is contemplating it, not in the abstract, but in an embodied form, with a resulting appeal to the emotional side of the nature. And certain meanings are thereby divulged which can only be communicated in this mode. That emerges which only discloses itself when the observer is presented at the same time with a general idea and a concrete image.<sup>2</sup> And the more complete his response to both in conjunction, the greater the degree of understanding that he will enjoy as a result.

#### 4. Conclusion

We have been concerned in the present chapter with the distinctive nature of intellectual activity, and with its limitations in dealing with certain deeper types of experience. But there is another aspect of ideas that still calls for consideration, and that is the positive function that they perform in aiding us to regulate our vital and expansive energies. This important theme will be discussed in the next two chapters, after which we shall be in a position to examine directly the basic problem of synthesizing the mental and the emotional powers of the soul.



## CHAPTER VI

### IDEAL AND SPATIAL

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IN THE PRESENT chapter I shall consider the distinctive character of 'ideas'. I shall have nothing to say regarding their correspondence with reality in the epistemological sense, since we have discussed this topic already in Chapter IV. Nor shall I deal either with the problem of determining how far they are 'true', in the sense that they can be seen to have a correct objective reference. For the issues that are here involved are relatively straightforward, it being a question of applying various criteria in accordance with methods (induction, deduction, operationalism, etc.) that are generally understood. What I shall be concerned with, rather, is the nature of the mental relationships that are involved in handling concepts, a question which presents some rather difficult aspects.

#### 1. *The Units of Thought*

What do we mean when we say that an idea takes shape in the mind? Simply that we picture certain elements as existing in a particular relationship to one another. On the most elementary level we can imagine, say, a dot. Even this is not absolutely basic, since we may find ourselves thinking of it as being of a particular colour, or as appearing against a certain type of background. But, relatively speaking, we are concerned with a conception of a simple type.

From this we may proceed to imagine a series of dots arranged in a pattern. And as our mental processes become more complicated we find ourselves contemplating connections of the most intricate kind, whether it be in the field of science, art, politics or philosophy. But, as we saw earlier (p. 78), it is always a question of considering relations rather than the concrete objects within, or between, which they can be observed.

Again, ideas belong to the realm of the Intelligible rather than to

that of the Sensible. They have no material characteristics, such as weight, colour, physical shape, position in space, odour or sound—although of course they may be ideas *of* such things. Moreover, there is nothing in the inherent character of ideas to cause them to come into association with the material realm of existence. So far as we restrict our attention strictly to the mental plane we are occupied with relations that may be thought of as proliferating in a region of their own. An idea invites connection with some other idea or ideas. Or it can be resolved into its component elements of more simple ideas. Patterns and sequences of every conceivable type will display themselves before the mind of the imaginative thinker. But all these operations will take place in a peculiar sphere of being, very closely associated with the world of the senses, yet radically distinct from it. Their embodiment in the space-time world, if it is ever accomplished, is by virtue of another principle, which is essentially emotional rather than intellectual. On their own plane thoughts beget only further thoughts; for their incarnation another element in man's being must be called into operation. In other words, he must be possessed by an urge to associate them with the realm of physical matter, and, as remarked earlier, the root of this urge is essentially the principle of love.

We saw in the last chapter that because of their immaterial character ideas can always be considered in detachment from the physical setting in which they are perceived. And we saw also that anyone who is contemplating an embodied idea is thereby uniting two aspects of consciousness. For in one sense he is closely identified with what is immediately present to him, and in another he is engaged with something that is not associated with any location in space or time rather than another. Or to put it differently, he is experiencing the intensive and the extensive together. It will appear later that this combination has considerable significance.

The next point is that immaterial ideas are in an important sense *real*. On p. 75 I made a passing reference to the fact that although they can from one point of view be regarded as subjective, they may claim also to possess an objective status. This situation now calls for examination.

It is certainly true that in one aspect a person's thought may be regarded as 'private' psychological occurrences, and as a result will

be invested with a transient character. An idea floats or flashes into one's head. Or one plans to visit some particular place and the mind sets to work at calculating times, train connections and the like. But the project is dropped, and the ideas involved quickly fade away and are soon forgotten—although they are of course stored somewhere in the depths of the subconscious. Nor do they occupy our attention much longer even if they are carried out. On a deeper level a person can have established in his mind concepts of a far more permanent character, since they organize his views on major issues in the realms of politics, philosophy or religion. Or he may be inspired by a 'master' idea, or even become dominated by an *idée fixe*. But in all these cases it is a question only of processes that are taking place in a peculiar subjective sphere somewhere within the being of the individual concerned.

This, however, presupposes that we confine our attention to the actual experience of thinking as it is known to us from the inside. But there is another aspect of the matter. For I cannot contemplate an idea without picturing it as existing outside my own mind. As a result I stand in the same relation to it in this respect as I do to a physical object such as a brick, a coin or a chair. In other words, by a psychological necessity I experience it as an objective phenomenon. I analyse its features, talk about it to others, attend to it or disregard it, just as if it had material existence.

Thus a group of people will discuss the plan for an architectural exhibition in exactly the same way (so far as the element of objectivity is concerned) as they discuss the exhibition itself later when it has been brought into physical manifestation. In fact, a contemplated extension of the east wing, for instance, that was actually never built may to the end remain for them almost as 'real' as the rest of the building—more so, probably, if it happens to be better designed.

So what it comes to is that we have to regard an 'idea' as a transcendental entity—something which, although non-physical in character, truly exists on its own plane. And I must add that from the strictly philosophical standpoint an entity of this type has just as much right to be taken seriously as one that is met with in the material world. But this is a topic that I cannot pause to discuss at this point.

Through the fact that ideas exist in this fashion as units of thought they correspond in a number of respects to physical objects. It is true, of course, that from one point of view they exhibit a directly opposite character. Since they are immaterial they appear at the first glance to be at the farthest possible remove from the seemingly-solid bodies known to us through our senses. So marked is this contrast, in fact, that to some minds it seems impossible to conceive that there can be any bridge between them. There is what goes on in a non-material realm of being somewhere inside one's own head; and there are all sorts of things 'out there' with which one can make objective contact through one's physical senses. Are we not in this matter concerned with two different orders of being?

Yet with all this it is plain that they have a number of characteristics in common. Thus both ideas and objects are distinct, and describable by the use of words and formulas. They can both be either simple or complex in their structure. They can both be selected as subjects for philosophical consideration. And they can both be related by the mind to other elements in the field of our experience. Moreover, it is not difficult to see that ideas and objects are both built on the same plan. We have already noted that if we consider any body composed of physical matter we find that within it there are combined elements that are to be found also distributed about the world generally. The art of laying out a page of type, for instance, consists in assembling standard units—such as the characters of Caslon Old Face—in such a way that they produce a unique effect.

But clearly exactly the same principle applies to the composition of an idea. It too is created by associating in a special fashion elements which, remaining themselves, could have a place in combinations of a different kind. And it will be plain that in the case instanced above the correspondence between the plan for the printed page and the page as it finally exists can be absolutely exact.

On the other hand there is one respect in which they are sharply distinguished from one another. For thoughts are communicable in a sense that things are not. Ideas, unlike physical objects, can be introduced into the very being of another person. You can make him a present of something, of which he will then become the 'owner' or 'recipient', you can invite him to partake of food or drink, or you can inject, beneficently or otherwise, some substance

into his body. But that is as far as you can get in associating him directly with anything composed of physical matter. Ideas, on the contrary, can be communicated from one mind to another with a high degree of completeness.

And this means that at the particular time when this transference is being accomplished the unity between the two intelligences concerned is of a very close order. For since neither of them is located in the material realm it is difficult to see what difference exists at this given moment between them. The conclusion is that although individuals so far as they have bodies exist inescapably in separation from one another, so far as they are in true and unimpeded mental communication they have at least the possibility of transcending their separateness in a full measure by concern with ideas that are the same for each. Mutual participation in one another's interior condition can be achieved to an extent that is completely precluded while either is in any way identified with his physical body.

This situation presents some interesting aspects. It will be evident that the soul can overcome its servitude to the immediate by a process of intellectualization—in other words, by considering relations of the type that are to be met with generally in our experience, and which can therefore have a sterilizing effect in preserving us from that material contagion to which we are always in some measure exposed when we concern ourselves with particular objects and occasions. It now appears that it is also just such relations that enable us to escape from our psychological isolation and enter into communion with our fellow men. <sup>5</sup> It is evident that the clarification of our mental processes is the essential condition for becoming liberated, not only from the world, but also from our native egotism.

Moreover, as we noted earlier (p. 70), these two modes of release can be seen to be intimately associated with one another, since on the one hand to open the mind to wider vistas is to extend the range of one's human sympathies, and on the other wider contacts with others will lead inevitably to an enlargement of one's intellectual horizons. But in neither case is the individual concerned *primarily* with the realm of matter. While finally we have to bear in mind that men are so constituted that purely 'mystical' communion between them is very rarely possible. They are dependent for such

spiritual interflow upon a shared and accurate understanding of the formal elements in their environment—a point to which I shall return in a later chapter.

## 2. *The Significance of Space*

The next point to be examined is that through ideas we are related to the spatial rather than to the temporal aspect of existence. For it lies in the character of spatial formations that they are widely distributed, in the sense that particular combinations of material qualities are not. Thus the roundness of a penny is a general idea, since roundness can be met with everywhere. But the effect produced by, say, a dirty and bent coin bearing the all-but-effaced effigy of the young Queen Victoria is something special and particular that can only be known by direct inspection at one particular spot.

Here I must make it clear that in our present investigation we are not concerned with the space—or for that matter the time—of the physicists. The structure of the universe as a system known to us in terms of space, time, matter and energy raises for us questions of fascinating interest which present highly technical features. And we are all familiar with the fact that in dealing with them scientists find it convenient to conceive of physical happenings as space-time events.

But such formulations are made for certain limited purposes in order to explain the behaviour of material bodies. What we have here to take account of, on the contrary, are the *psychological* effects upon us of the temporal and the spatial aspects of our experience. It will be found, I would suggest, that they provide the key to a deep understanding of man's inner nature, and of his relation to the external world.

The first point to be noted is that it lies in the nature of spatial and temporal manifestations that they cannot be converted into one another. From the physical standpoint of course we can easily enough reduce measured time to space, as when we cause the hands of a watch to move round a dial, or speak of a train as doing so many miles per hour. In fact, all time measurement necessarily involves such conversion into spatial units. But in the psychological realm

we are concerned with two types of experiences that are radically different from one another.

Thus attention to the passage of time does not alter in any respect the impression made upon us by the objects around us. For example, if I observe that the sun is just setting at 7.32 p.m., this has no effect upon my response to the aesthetic spectacle provided by the sunset. Again, I may see from the speedometer that my car is travelling at forty-eight miles per hour, but practically all its characteristics remain the same for me at whatever speed I drive it, as well as when it is not moving at all. As another example, if I am so scientifically-minded as to note that it has taken me just two minutes and eighteen seconds to drink a cup of coffee, this fact has no bearing upon its flavour, or the amount of liquid I have consumed. Finally, it may occur to me that the book I am at present reading was published exactly forty years ago, but this does not alter in the smallest particular the character of its contents. And so on.

Conversely, if I am attending exclusively to the spatial characteristics of a thing I shall remain quite indifferent to the place that it happens to occupy in the time order. Suppose, for instance, that I am being taken on a conducted tour round a historical building. In the course of the itinerary I notice all sorts of architectural and other features that it presents. When the survey is concluded I discover that it has taken just over two hours to complete. But this fact obviously exists for me in an entirely different dimension of being from that in which I pursued my explorations. The significance and appeal of what I examined remains the same for me, whatever time was being recorded by the clock.

Or again, if I am absorbed in reading a novel in the train I am oblivious of the speed at which it is moving—although of course I may be vaguely aware of it subconsciously. And if I am studying a recent photograph of a friend, I disregard, so far as I consider what his features reveal *now*, that fact that his appearance has changed since I first met him. Further, there is the interesting point that even if I am examining the relation between past, present and future happenings, as when I survey the development of a chain of historical events, I have still no direct concern with the temporal. The mind that thinks *about* time is not within time. It lies in the nature of all ideas that they are timeless, and to be occupied with them is to

disassociate oneself for a season from the realm of material succession.

The next point is that there is a close connection between the formal and the spatial elements in our experience. Whenever we are thinking formally we become inevitably concerned with something more or less closely equivalent to the spatial. The essence of thought is the establishing of distinctions. It is certainly true that some of these distinctions (it is a matter for specialists to decide) are probably discerned purely on the mental plane—as, for example, when we consider the abstract series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.<sup>1</sup> And if, to give another instance, we are examining the sub-varieties of selfishness or charity, we are also disengaged from the realm of space. But as far as the great mass of our thinking is concerned there can be no doubt that it is conducted by employing spatial concepts.

We saw earlier (p. 16) that we have no experience of matter *in general*. And in the same way it should also be evident that we have no experience also of space as a universal continuum, which is of the order of a philosophical postulate only. Our actual thinking is conducted almost entirely by employing spatial concepts.<sup>1</sup>

The reason is simple enough. We think practically all the time in terms of *images*. And it lies in the nature of an image that it presents itself as extended in space. Even in 'abstract' thinking imagery plays an important role. For example, the thinker referred to above who is engaged in analysing selfishness will only be able to gain a grip on his problem by visualizing people, real or imagined, who display different aspects of this tendency. As for the artists, their whole activity consists in making different kinds of designs and patterns, all of which are spatially disposed.

Finally, even when the essential nature of what is being considered is non-spatial, the thinker is practically always compelled, in order to make his ideas clear to himself, to represent them in visual terms. The musician sets down the score of his composition, the philosopher resorts to various kinds of diagrams, the scientist in almost all fields is dependent on models and schemes. Moreover, it is a fact of considerable importance that in order to convey ideas in a living fashion to others we all have to employ examples and analogies drawn from the natural world. In other words, if you wish to be effective as an expositor you must not only *say* but also



*show* what you mean. You must relate the theoretical at every possible point to the concrete.

This process of objectification is not to be regarded, however, as simply a concession to weak and earth-bound minds that are incapable of thinking in abstract terms. On the contrary, we are here concerned with the fundamental principle that it is only when ideas have been wedded to perceptions that the real discloses itself to our minds. Admittedly, the capacity to manipulate abstractions without the need for sensory crutches affords decisive evidence of intellectual power. But it is no less true that it implies command over only one element in our knowledge. The thinker who can relate his ideas at every point to the living and immediate is completing a process that the intellectual has carried only to a certain stage. He has given expression to the Word.

Now as to the effect of the spatial on the mind. We have seen earlier that we are peculiarly liable to be disturbed by powerful sensory impressions, particularly if they succeed one another rapidly, and not in accordance with any rhythmic order. But it will be evident that so far as we give ourselves up to the consideration of the spatial we are withdrawn from this sphere of influence. For our attention is centred upon the immaterial and the widely distributed. The effect is that we are no longer in close relation to the sensate and the temporal. Or to be more exact, although we may be engaged with sensory experience it is subordinated to the spatial and the formal.

A familiar example of the type of detachment that is thus implied is provided by the technique of the surgeon who, without any failure in humanity, examines intently the purely clinical features of the diseased organ of a patient. As long as he is in this state of mind the fact that its characteristics are repulsive in themselves is a matter of total indifference to him. So he speaks quite legitimately of a 'beautiful' ulcer or a 'classic' case of goitre. And of course the psychologist adopts the same attitude towards the morbid emotional and mental manifestations of his patients.

Apart from such extreme examples of the abstraction of the formal from the qualitative, it can be seen that we experience the universal and timeless character of the spatial on every occasion when, even in the most fleeting fashion, we take note of the shapes and forms

around us. To perceive even casually that, say, a courtyard is square is to escape to that extent from the realm of change. Such liberation can occur even in the midst of circumstances that are otherwise profoundly disturbing emotionally. In fact it would almost seem as if in the presence of extreme danger our perceptions in this sphere are actually heightened. At the very moment of an accident the mind manifests a power of detached observation that usually surprises the individual himself.

But of course the full significance of concern with the formal only appears when we concentrate upon it systematically at our leisure. We then come to realize that the spiritual possibilities that such a discipline opens up for us are very considerable. First of all a very peaceful influence is exercised upon the soul. Shapes and figures that are harmonious induce in the mind a condition of calm. It is the material characteristics of objects that are the source of the emotional perturbations to which we are all subject. What disturbs our equanimity is the Sensible. This does not apply, of course, to such massive, simple and primitive impressions as those which are produced upon us by the blue of the sky, the stillness of a forest, the feel of earth, or the rhythmic sound of breakers on a shore. But it does certainly apply to the effects upon our organisms of vivid, changing and disruptive physical stimuli of the type to which we are so extensively subjected in our daily lives, and particularly in such a corrupted civilization as our own.

The mark of the Intelligible, on the contrary, is that it is invested with an atmosphere of repose and detachment. All true intellectual operations are passionless; it is only their outworkings and applications that cause us disquietude. Purely mental activity—to the degree that as psycho-somatic beings we can achieve it—is untinged with emotion, conducted in a remote sphere from that in which we fight love, adventure and struggle for our existence. The prevailing mood is one of serene and detached contemplation—a very different state of mind from that expressed by such declarations as ‘Drink to me only with thine eyes’, or ‘Give me liberty or give me death!’

Hence those of us who have any taste for the things of the mind early discover that quiet, scholastic or scientific study, in which one is playing the part as far as possible of the impersonal and sensitive observer, is a most valuable corrective of emotionally agitated states.

Such reflective consideration of ideas heals, tranquillizes and restores. Although its potency is not that of religious or aesthetic contemplation, which involves also sublimated feeling, it is a blessed compensation for the vagaries and assaults of matter. We are no longer immersed in life, but for a season standing back from it. And we are occupying ourselves with that which pertains to space rather than with that which pertains to time—with figures, forms, relationships and structures which have serious significance for us, and are not necessarily bound up with any manifestation in particular. And the effect is that we enter for a time into a condition of calm and relaxation.

Now the spatial has this influence upon our minds primarily because it is closely related to the element of permanence in our experience. Ideas—which, as we have seen, are represented by us in space—are both immaterial and encountered in all sorts of different connections. As a result they necessarily have an enduring character for us in relation to the impermanent aggregations of matter with which they are associated. They are immortal, not only in the sense that they are not compounded of perishable substance, but in the sense also that throughout human history they appear in all sorts of settings, without their essential nature being thereby affected.

But in order to appreciate properly the significance of this theme we must first consider more closely the nature of permanency.

## CHAPTER VII

# THE REALM OF THE PERMANENT

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### I. *Two Modes of Being*

WHAT IS OUR criterion of permanence? It is evident that we are compelled to think of the permanent as that which remains unchanged in the midst of the changing conditions in which it appears. A railway station is permanent in relation to the trains that pass through it; a bank is permanent in relation to the sums of money that it handles; the earth is permanent in relation to the changes that are in process on its surface; there is something within each individual that is permanent in relation to the changes that take place in his sentiments and intellectual assumptions.

It is further apparent that permanence is a matter of definition. The characteristics of an object change, while still leaving what we call its distinctive character unmodified. Thus a garment such as an overcoat will preserve its basic style and function, even though the material of which it is made is all the time deteriorating. And whatever its present condition, a 1938 automobile normally still possesses today the fundamental features of the original model. In the same way, apart from accidents, a man's general build and appearance usually remains substantially the same throughout his adult life.

But of course in the case of certain objects a point is reached at which we judge that the alterations involved have become so radical that we have to regard the original manifestation as having passed out of existence—as with a building that has been reconstructed and adapted to such a degree that in effect it has been replaced by another on the same site.

One must also recognize that the element within a changing manifestation which persists is necessarily immaterial in character. When we say that an object exists physically we mean that it is known to us through the exercise of our senses. They alone enable

us to distinguish between something that is merely imagined and something that is 'really there'. With their aid we can establish the fact that a particular thing is to be found at a certain place and time. And by a 'particular thing' we mean a collection of qualities—such as coldness, heaviness, length, dampness and the like which are presented to us in conjunction at a given moment. As a result of these impressions we conclude that the object is located in 'this' world and not in some merely mental realm.

Experience of such an object is experience of *this*—a matter of direct sensory contact. But to the degree that we concern ourselves even on the most elementary level with its intelligible aspects we become occupied with that which does not, and cannot, belong to the particular. This situation we have already considered fairly closely, accepting the principle that all forms exist primarily in the sphere of the mind—even though the great majority of them are discerned by us in an embodied form.

It follows, therefore, that the formal characteristics of an object will always be more enduring than the condition of perishable substance of which it is composed. For since they constitute what may be described as its basic structure they will have a relatively permanent nature. If in a particular case the form is drastically and suddenly altered—as with an atomic explosion—then the object as originally conceived ceases to exist, and we have to begin all over again. So long, however, as formal continuity is maintained, it must always be the case that the material elements involved will have a more transient character than the idea for which they provide the physical vehicle.

Moreover, there is this interesting point to be observed. Such is the nature of the formal that it has always for us an *absolute* character. It is not simply a question of comparing the nature of one impermanent situation with another that presents somewhat less impermanent features. If, for instance, we are contemplating a rock in the midst of a stream and contrasting its immobility with the turbulence of the water that is rushing past it, we do not get to the root of the matter simply by reflecting that a stone is no more immune from the relentless processes of time than is a liquid. This is simply to present the situation on the plane of science. The really significant fact is that something more than relativity is entailed. For if we look at the

manifestation with the spiritual eye we perceive that the rock has acquired a symbolical meaning for us, in that through it, as it were, we associate ourselves with a principle of permanence that pervades the whole of the universe. And the more perfect and meaningful the form concerned, the more conscious do we become of this transcendental aspect of the intelligible.

We must also take account of the mode of persistence involved in process. The continuity of, say, Cleopatra's Needle is static, since it implies simply that the same system of relationships remains embodied decade after decade in the monument. The effect is that the idea expressed when it was originally designed continues to be manifested for as long as the stonework persists. But there is also a type of idea that discloses itself only through a series of physical situations, as when a theme is unfolded in a symphony or a ballet. The person attending to such a performance can only appreciate its significance if his memory is sufficiently reliable to enable him to relate each successive element in the whole to those by which it has been preceded. A game of chess exemplifies, of course, the same principle, except that in this case reference is principally to the future.

It will be evident that we are concerned in such cases with a more abstract type of experience than that involved in the direct contemplation of a physical manifestation of an enduring type. For since appreciation is here in part dependent upon memory, we are most of the time engaged at second-hand with ideas that have ceased to receive physical embodiment. To be exact, our minds are active in relating what is immediately being presented to us with other elements in an ordered whole that were presented to it earlier and have now disappeared, so that a synthesis of the actual and the recollected is all the time being effected. (Strictly speaking, of course, immediate experience passes into memory for us at each instant; but I am comparing knowledge that can be effortlessly encompassed in one act of apprehension with that which needs definitely to be recalled.) So we have to conclude that in respect of such manifestations our relation to reality is less complete than when we are contemplating something, such as a picture, the total characteristics of which are disclosed to us, to all intents and purposes, at the moment when we set eyes upon it, and which can be identified again by re-inspection.

On the other hand in the case of what may be described as dynamic, as opposed to static, forms this weakness is redeemed somewhat through the fact that, as remarked, the elements involved constitute an organic whole. There is an obvious distinction between the effect upon the mind of a merely random succession of impressions, such as that produced by the passage of vehicles down a street, and an ordered sequence of the type represented by a formal procession. This is an interesting point, for it discloses the important principle that by relating ourselves to the ideal we can escape from the distracting influences exercised upon us by physical matter. It is a commonplace that an undue surrender to merely miscellaneous impressions has a seriously weakening effect on the mind. Interest in such manifestations is of great value in inducing relaxation in the case of fatigue (and is therefore perfectly appropriate to a holiday mood), but it should evidently be kept to a minimum if any penetration into reality is sought.

So far as dynamic form is concerned we also find that the permanent elements in the manifestation are likely to be of a more intangible character than the impermanent. For whereas the transient material aggregations perceived by our senses are of a relatively gross order, the continuities discernible within them are immaterial only, belonging to the subtle world of thought. Thus Eton College, with all its buildings and activities, its masters and its boys, is at each successive point in its history an existent, tangible fact. But it is a more delicate matter to determine exactly in what sense 'the spirit of Eton' may be said to endure through the generations. We are brought back once more to the problem of deciding in what sense continuity may be deemed in a given instance to persist within change.

Now as to the significance of permanence and impermanence for the soul. It is plain that man is so constituted that he derives a deep satisfaction from association with them both. He is not properly nourished spiritually unless on the one hand he is linked with the secure and the unchanging and on the other with the novel, the spontaneous and the refreshingly unexpected. The texture of a healthy life is woven of persistence and variety—this is elementary enough.

So powerful are our responses in this respect that we can safely

conclude that there must be something deep within the nature of reality to call forth these reactions. We are impelled to the view that the Real is known to us in two complementary modes as Being and Becoming, and that they must be accorded an equal metaphysical status. But to the extent that we concern ourselves with either of them at the expense of the other we fall into a condition of illusion. The key to emancipation lies in responding to each on every occasion in full and equal measure.

## 2. *The Nature of Permanence*

We have seen that permanence implies always continuity within change. But how are we to conceive of that element which underlies, and persists within, the transient?

The first possibility that offers itself is the notion that the enduring must be identified with the material. All things on this view are composed of physical matter, which must be thought of as the permanent substratum of phenomena. Here we become concerned with some issues that need to be carefully analysed.

First of all, we have already seen (p. 15) that the realm of material substance may be actually only a temporary densification of some etheric state of being of a more refined nature, and which may, for all we know, be primarily mental in character. We cannot therefore safely take our stand on the view that matter is an eternal foundation for the universe in which we find ourselves living.

At the same time we have to recognize that physical matter as we experience it can be thought of as a manifestation of a basic but directly unknowable condition of being which corresponds in the objective mode to that state of subjective being which we experience within ourselves. These two conditions must be regarded as correlative, and of equal metaphysical significance. For surely only the unimaginative will today accept the materialistic view that consciousness is merely 'epiphenomenal' in character.

Yet even if we postulate that there exists (either as matter, or as that which lies behind it) a universal foundation for all the phenomena of which we are aware, the principle still applies that, as we saw earlier (pp. 16-7), our actual experience is of particular aggregations of matter. Matter-as-a-whole is a philosophical concept only.



Our actual dealings are with the individual manifestations for which it provides the foundation, and which constitute what may be described as our significant environment.

Since, however, they are by definition transitory in nature it follows that in themselves they provide us with no link with the permanent element in reality; in fact, they represent its exact opposite. For all material configurations belong only to the realm of change.

It can also be seen that we cannot look for permanence in the sphere of the biological and the vital, which is a region of continual becoming, traditionally under the influence of the inconstant moon. The world of generation is one in which creatures appear, maintain themselves for a season, and are then resolved again into dust, entangled in the fullest measure in the web of transiency and materiality woven by Nature to contain them.

The only conclusion left for us, therefore, is that we must look for permanence in the sphere of the *mind*. We must take the view that we relate ourselves to the changeless on the mental plane alone. And here also it is a matter of distinguishing between transcendental realities and their disclosure in time. Just as behind (or within) all ephemeral vital manifestations there may be intuited an abiding, inexhaustible source of Life, so also, we must believe, behind the forms that are presented to us phenomenally there is a system of Eternal Ideas, lying equally beyond the realm of space and time. Since, however, as has been remarked above, we are here occupied only with the extended and the visible, we must confine our attention to ideas as we experience them in terms of manifestation.

We have accepted the principle that they are essentially immaterial. As they have no physical attributes they cannot in the nature of the case be affected in any way by material influences. And from this it necessarily follows that they have an enduring character in relation to the unstable and transitory aggregations of matter in which they may be embodied. An idea is indestructible, for the simple reason that there is no known agency that can terminate its existence! Such are the *metaphysical* grounds for accepting the conclusion that mental creations must be assigned to the realm of the transcendental.

But this also has to be considered. A considerable proportion of them—and particularly those which correspond to the simpler

elements in our experience—are invested with permanency in a less ultimate sense, for the reason that they are to be met with continually in an embodied form in the phenomenal realm. In other words, they are very widely *distributed* in space and time.

Throughout the whole of our waking existence we are presented with forms, or systems of relations, of different types. They may be of an elementary character like squares, curves and circles, or they may be extremely intricate, as in the case of mathematical equations.

The essential point is that although the individual objects in which they are disclosed may be seen only fleetingly, and will in any case sooner or later pass out of existence, the forms themselves are fundamental elements in our knowledge. One cannot, in fact, open one's eyes for an instant without being confronted by some of them. And it will also be plain that their character is constant, not only for everybody, but throughout the history of the world. Scrolls, wave-forms, wedges, continuous and broken lines and sounds, colour contrasts, pulsations in different mediums, bifurcations, gradations, angles—all these formations were just as much part of man's experience in the Stone Age as they are for us now, and will be for our descendants in the remote future. In fact, such manifestations may be described as the basic structure of the world in which we find ourselves living. Moreover, it is impossible for us to conceive of any state of existence—on, say, other planets—in which such fundamental elements would not be present.

Further, this extension in space is by no means limited to forms of a simple type. For ideas, as we have seen earlier, are eminently communicable. And this applies not only to elementary notions, but to conceptions of the most elaborate type. Hence mental patterns of a very intricate order can not only be passed from one living individual to others, but perpetuated throughout the ages. Amongst primitive peoples long epic poems can be faithfully reproduced by a purely oral technique over hundreds or even thousands of years. The astrological theories of the Babylonians, the text of the plays of Sophocles, the theorems of Euclid, the arguments of the scholastic philosophers, the compositions of Bach, the formulas used in chemistry and physics may in one sense be said to be eternal, in that they can be preserved unchanged in every part of the world for as long as civilization lasts.

Finally, just as the simple forms referred to earlier convey the same message to us irrespective of the material in which they are embodied—the meaning of 57, for instance, is the same whether it is stamped on paper, spoken aloud, or carved in wood or stone—so also do more complex ideas possess the same intrinsic significance whatever the circumstances in which they are considered, and the character of the men and women who are studying them. It will be plain, for instance, that, so far as they are properly understood, the principles of that system of voting devised by Thomas Hare and known as Proportional Representation must have been exactly the same for those by whom they were first studied in 1859 as for the person who examines them today. Of course the intellectual and social backgrounds of those concerned are by no means the same, and their reactions to the scheme are therefore likely to differ considerably. But its intrinsic nature will be the same for both.

So it should be quite clear that relative to the transient aggregations of matter ideas are invested with a permanent quality. To be concerned with mental concepts is to disengage oneself from the vicissitudes of biological and historical existence. We have of course to recognize that people cannot avoid thinking in terms of the ideas that shape the particular culture in which they are living. Our values are not those of the ancient Chinese or Egyptians, or of the men and women of the Middle Ages. But it remains true that although our environment imposes definite limits upon the type and range of the notions with which we occupy ourselves, so far as we are truly *thinking* we have emancipated ourselves from it—since, whatever its origin, an idea once it is evolved has no necessary connection with the condition of affairs in which it originated.

Now an important point. While ideas may be immortal in the sense defined above, they are far from being of equal significance. It is obviously possible, for instance, for a person, or a group of people, to evolve conceptions which, although they are transmissible and in a sense indestructible, are devoid of any serious meaning or lasting value:

For I was thinking of a plan  
To dye one's whiskers green,  
And always use so large a fan  
That they could not be seen.

Such ideas, although very entertaining, are merely products of misplaced ingenuity, or playfulness. What, we have therefore to enquire, is the mark of concepts that aid us in relating ourselves to the deeper and more enduring elements in our experience?

It will be clear in the first place that in certain regions of knowledge man is capable of arriving at principles that do really help him to understand and predict the behaviour of objects. This applies particularly to the realm of physics and chemistry. The laws involved may not, as we now perceive, be valid in respect to extreme conditions of velocity, temperature and the like, but they remain otherwise applicable. Thus no discoveries in the field of the new physics affect the principles controlling the behaviour of objects in the macrocosmic realm. The structures of crystals, for instance, remain for us what they were.

But, as remarked earlier, to the degree that we move away from the plane of the material uncertainty begins increasingly to prevail. We then become involved with a bewildering multiplicity of schemes, classifications, theories and speculations—in brief, with a host of attempted ways of introducing order into our experience. So diverse and contradictory are they that the mystically-minded excusably take the view that all conceptual thinking is relative and misleading, and that the path to truth is by way of direct contemplation alone.

This, however, cannot satisfy us. For we have accepted the principle that the formal as well as the qualitative aspects of experience must be properly acknowledged by us. We are committed, therefore, to think on this plane as intelligently as we can. It may indeed be true that on a very high level of awareness all conceptual thinking is transcended. But it is true also that we do not live only in the Infinite, but are called upon to deal adequately with all modes of existence.

This means that we must gain a proper understanding of the relations between objects which disclose themselves on each successive plane of being. Thus so far as we are engaged with chemistry we must master its basic principles. And the same applies to biology, sociology, psychology, religion and all other fields of knowledge. Moreover, we must be scrupulously careful to respect the character of each 'universe of discourse' with which we become

concerned. The inexcusable error is to 'confuse the planes'.

Now the view I wish to advance is that if a person continues conscientiously in his attempts to organize his experience in this way *while keeping his mind open to spiritual influences*, he will in time reach the point of recognizing the existence of a general scheme of things, comprising the material, the psychological and the transcendental, and of acknowledging its claims upon him.

The essential function of the mind lies in its power of freely combining ideas. But in respect of this activity we proceed, stage by stage, to deeper levels of organization. Although we begin by connecting things together in arbitrary, fanciful or superficial ways, as our experience deepens we become increasingly conscious of, and respectful to, ideas that impress us as possessing a fundamental character. As our progress continues we become weary of relativism, speculation and empiricism, and devote ourselves to meditation upon forms, symbols and processes that appear to us to be really basic in nature. In other words, we become aware of the limits within which we can manifest our inner powers with impunity.

In discussing the problem of expression in an earlier chapter (p. 26 *seq.*) we considered some of its more important features. We found that we had to reckon in this sphere with the demands of logic, the resistance of matter, the existence of a system of natural law, and the challenge presented to us by individual objects and persons. And we saw also that we are all bound to pay due regard to certain fundamental moral obligations, respect for which is an essential condition for any true creativeness or peace of mind. Although not easily analysable, they can at least be clearly recognized. And the fact that they do not lend themselves to clear and logical formulation does not diminish the authority that they possess for us.

Our grasp of the total scheme within which we have to develop our consciousness is, of course, painfully limited. But our acceptance of it does at least imply that we allow for the existence, as imperishable realities, of Divine Ideas, or creations of the Logos, even if we are reluctant to describe them in such terms. We see them as constituting the only foundation on which we can safely build. In practical terms this means that we cannot afford to disregard the claims upon us of cosmic law, both in the subjective and the

objective realms. If we transgress this law we invariably suffer in the end.

It is within such conditions that we are obliged to live, think and create. And it is because the productions of unbalanced and arbitrary minds do not conform to this obligation that we are impelled to reject them, and that such appeal as they can command is of brief duration and limited in its range. What, for instance, is the status of the ideas of the Nazis against the background of history?

And here it should be noted that incorrect mental conceptions are not primarily adjusted by encounters with 'hard facts', but through the influence of more radical ideas. For that scheme of things to which I have referred above is after all basically a system of relations to which expression has been given in physical form. So the essential problem for the anti-social or anti-cosmic individual is that of perceiving the nature of valid as compared with egotistic mental structures. He is essentially concerned, not with things but with ideas.

Nevertheless, the principle remains that, as we saw earlier (pp. 40-1), the theoretical has no real power over the soul except in so far as it is presented to us in living, sensory terms. So what it really comes to is that although we basically work out our destiny in resolving conflicts that take place in the field of ideas, what this implies in a psychological and secondary sense is that we are called upon to struggle with conflicting images, both of pictured and actual realities. And it can also be seen that whereas a more mature spirit will be able by sheer mental concentration to resolve many of his problems on the contemplative plane, the more undeveloped person will have no alternative to taking 'the hard way', and gaining his realizations by the brutal impact of events and persons upon him.

Now a further consideration of importance. The scheme or system of which I am speaking is *permanent* in character. It represents the limits ordained (the transcendentalist would affirm) by Supreme Mind within which the game of life has to be played by us all, however difficult it may be for us to grasp its nature. The purpose of all spiritual training is to help men and women to deepen and enlarge their conception of its import, with the realization, however, that they can never hope in the course of all eternity to grasp fully the character of the Whole.

But at the same time we have also seen that the spirit of man expresses itself by the production of continually new mental creations. And the Scheme is such that full freedom is allowed for within it for this spontaneous activity, provided only that it is consonant with what may be termed basic law. There are times and seasons at which, without injury to anyone else, and without weakening his relation to the Source of his being, a man can sing, dance, build, make love, speculate or adventure. In other words, if we look at the situation on a sufficiently high level we find that there is no essential contradiction between necessity and freedom, or between the permanent and the impermanent aspects of experience.

Space does not permit working this out in detail, but the essence of the matter is that freedom is a psychological experience and not a matter of the individual's situation in space and time. Thus the average American will recognize that it is extremely unlikely that he will be able in the course of his lifetime to visit all the states in the Union, but unless he has a strong impulse to do so the disability will cause him no hardship. In fact, the matter will probably scarcely occupy his mind at all. What lies beyond the mountains disturbs our peace of mind only when we begin to experience an itch to explore the unknown.

In the same way we are not irked or disappointed because our biological organisms permit us only to live on the earth within a very limited range of temperature and pressure. For unless we become fanatically interested in the possibilities offered to us by space travel we are rightly absorbed by the creative modes of expression available to us within this field. The various combinations which it is possible for us to achieve within the limits of a normal environment are, for an imaginative mind, so rich and fascinating that one might reasonably affirm that we have more freedom on our hands than we can cope with—provided, of course, that we realize that it consists, not in a licence to grab everything we fancy or to rush aimlessly about the surface of the earth, but to contemplate in inner liberty the play of the forces at work in the life around us, and to weave certain modest patterns of our own.

To put it differently, the structure of the universe is such that at least the elementary features of the Scheme can be recognized by a sensitive human being within the relatively restricted limits of his

transient earthly environment. For the physical setting is of such a character that, in a really miraculous way, it epitomizes, or faithfully reflects, the character of those far wider realms of experience which, as the religious at least believe, will be accorded to him at a later point in his history. Hence the emphasis laid by all serious spiritual schools on the momentousness of the individual's mortal situation.

### 3. *The Factor of Interdependence*

Now another aspect. The permanence of any individual manifestation is closely bound up with its place in some wider system. The isolated object or person is threatened with weakness or destruction. Survival depends upon the power of the individual to call upon the resources of an organization of which he is a part. The animal that detaches itself from the herd is soon doomed to extinction. Nomads and vagabonds have an uneasy and precarious existence, grudgingly tolerated by the rest of the community. The small trader can maintain himself only with great difficulty when the large, highly organized corporation comes to dominate the scene. And the state that defies the principles of international solidarity is established only on a very uncertain foundation.

On the other hand it is the mark of every organic system that each of its parts has a function in the whole, while its total resources can be brought to bear with concentrated effect upon any region of its being that is threatened from without or in need of reinforcement or repair. The principle finds expression in the most remarkable fashion in the economy of the body, which adjusts itself as a whole to whatever situation it may find itself confronted with. In the social realm it finds expression in any well-run police force, charity organization or university. And the same process occurs in the mental sphere, since it is the mark of the properly educated person that he has at his command a fund of knowledge that can be applied as required to any of the individual problems with which he has to deal.

In all the instances mentioned power, stability and clarification result from the fact that some limited and ephemeral situation has been linked up with others of a more permanent character. A crisis is surmounted because it is possible to call upon some fund or other



that is already established on a tried and enduring basis. Whether it is a question of fats stored within the body, a credit account at the bank, blood transfusion, social standing, legal sanctions, strategic location, the rites of the Church—the principle entailed is the same: the past is brought constructively to bear upon the present and misfortune or disaster avoided.

It is of interest at this point to consider the sharp contrast that offers itself between reinforcement of this order and that which takes place in a random and unorganized fashion. In an earlier chapter I suggested that it lies in the nature of all purely material manifestations that they exert influences that are unco-ordinated with those that happen to be active in their neighbourhood. There is no principle inherent in any one of them to cause it to take account of any other. Flood water will impersonally carry away anything that chances to lie in its path, fire consumes everything perishable that it touches, gravity acts upon all bodies equally. Co-ordination belongs solely to the mental principle of form.

The result is that exposure to unorganized material influences—or, the sensory qualities manifested by objects—can only too easily have a confusing, and even a disintegrating, effect. I may here recall what was said in an earlier chapter (pp. 21-2) regarding the structure of ascending and descending spirals: aggregation can be effected either in a constructive or a destructive mode. And with respect to the second type of situation it is easy to see that whenever a number of inharmonious forces are brought to bear together—disrhythmic sounds, crude colours, irregular movements, strong stimulants, and the like—we are bewildered and fatigued. Or, to take a more depressing example, it is sickness *and* the denial of love, *and* unemployment, *and* squalor that will together break down even the strongest soul. Further, we have to reckon with the situation created when, either by chance or by human skill, different types of agreeable sensory impressions are all directed upon us at the same time—such as the combination of wine, moonlight, music, the alluring female, and the softness of the night air. The chances are that the person who is subjected to such influences in concert will be overpowered, by his senses, with possible disastrous results. For there will very likely be no compensatory principle at work to help him to see them in perspective. And by 'perspective' one necessarily means respect

for factors of a more basic type that can counteract the intoxicating effect of the immediate—whether it be a question of a carefully consolidated philosophical scheme, an established system of sentiments, a vow at the altar, or simply a Promise to Mother.

On the other hand it is a matter of experience that a harmonious combination of creative influences has a most powerful and uplifting effect upon the mind. Can any imaginative person fail to be impressed by the spectacle of a body of disciplined people who are engaged in some serious, well-planned activity in dignified and beautiful surroundings? It is the mutual reinforcement of the influences at work which provides the key to the impression produced upon anyone contemplating the scene. He finds himself in the presence of the unified, and this stirs him deeply, since it gives him a strong sense of reality, while at the same time presenting him with a situation of which he can give no satisfying account in purely rational terms.

This brings out an important point. It is true from one point of view that our assurance that objects are 'real' derives from the fact that we can see, touch, and in certain cases hear, smell or taste, them. But it is not less true also that the fact that they are presented to us in certain relationships (as in the instance given above) also makes a most powerful impression upon our minds. In other words, we do actually acknowledge that materialism is an inadequate form of philosophy, and that the sensory and the formal *both* contribute powerfully to our sense of being in contact with the Real.

It can also be seen that whenever a system of interdependent influences acquires a high cultural character our sense of permanence is enhanced to a marked degree. There is first of all a wide distribution involved in the spatial realm. Temples, factories, schools and colleges, art centres and laboratories are to be met with in different parts of the earth, and all as having their place in some unified system controlled from one centre. What strikes the observer as most significant is the fact that no one of them is indispensable in relation to the Whole, for the scheme provides, not for individual establishments, but for representative types of activity. Yet those directing the organization jealously maintain and protect each of its elements.

The social and intellectual aspects of such a totality are of great significance. For the person who has found a spiritual home within

it cannot but be conscious of the fact that a comprehensive system of sympathies and collectively acknowledged principles binds the whole institution together, and that it not only embraces the present, but extends far back into the past, with corresponding potentialities for the future. What any one man within its ambit does, feels or thinks is reinforced in an impressive fashion by its continuity with the deeds, sentiments and ideas of a host of other people, living and dead (and for that matter, destined to be born), who are all united by common commitments, allegiances and convictions. The result for all concerned is a deep sense of security and of indifference to temporal vicissitudes. Even the humblest individual is sustained by the fact that he has his place within a Whole that has persisted through the centuries, that is the repository of a wisdom which is adequate for all emergencies, however surprising, and which can offer him boundless resources in the way of healing, compassion and inspiration.

To put it somewhat differently, the person concerned has expanded his consciousness to the point that he realizes, either clearly or obscurely, that both his mental processes and his emotional responses are being reinforced through his participation in a wider realm of conscious life. He is thinking and feeling as one of a company of spirits whose ideas have become harmonized. And thereby he has transcended the condition originally imposed upon him by the fact that he is in one aspect a biological organism, limited by heredity and environment. Further, he perceives that his power to organize his personal experience depends upon his interior spiritual affiliations with a host of other beings. He has, in fact, become a distinct and responsible element in a wider Self.

Yet all systems so far known to us can unfortunately claim only a limited degree of comprehensiveness. However venerable their aspect, or vast their resources, the passage of time inevitably discloses, through the persons of a rebellious minority who have responded to some aspect of truth that they have neglected or repudiated, that they fall short of true catholicity. Nevertheless, their existence, besides being valuable enough in itself, does at least serve to lead imaginative minds to the contemplation of an Absolute within which is included every conceivable element in the total scheme, and this in a perfected form.

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE PROBLEM OF SYNTHESIS

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### 1. *Recapitulation*

WE HAVE NOW reached a point in our enquiry at which it will be appropriate to undertake a brief survey of the ground that we have so far covered.

First of all, we saw that there is a deep impulse within the human soul to respond to and create unity. It can only do this, however, by establishing a correct relation with the external world in which it finds itself incarnated, the key to which lies in the fact that the Within and the Without are in essence one. But the externalization of inner being entails an overcoming of the limiting influence of physical matter, expressed in the effect upon the mind of the physical qualities of objects.

The nature of the soul is dual, since man must be regarded as an androgynous being whose two basic functions are those of feeling and thinking. But since in the early stages of his development they are experienced as being almost antithetical in character the task of co-ordinating them presents him with a serious problem, which is not to be solved in any complete sense by psychotherapeutic treatment alone.

When we examine the character of emotion and thought more closely we see that the function of the first is to place the individual in a living and dynamic relation with the object, which will otherwise have for him only a phenomenal, theoretical and insubstantial character. Love thus appears as an essential factor in the process of true knowing. Further, it is through love alone that man can extend the boundaries of the world in which he is imaginatively living. And this process of expansion awakens in him in course of time a

realization of the existence of unseen realms of being from which a purely sensory existence excludes him.

As to the intellect, its activity, when exercised in true freedom, is expressive of the creative power of man's inner spirit, which is ever engaged in contemplating ideas of different types and establishing new combinations between them. Its operations are carried out in a realm of being that occupies an intermediate position between the inner realm of subjective life and the external realm of phenomena. As a result we have to conclude that ideas have a permanent and timeless character, being intrinsically independent of the world of change. At the same time they enjoy a further independence through the fact that they are widely distributed in an embodied form as part of our experience of the external universe. But they acquire an established character as objects of human contemplation only to the degree that they accord with the deeper nature of existence by being in a harmonious relation to one another. On the highest level we are involved in this matter with a system of Ideas that exist primarily in the Divine Mind.

But all ideas, however exalted they may be, remain sterile and theoretical until they are given some form of objectification in the external world. And this means that a dual type of synthesis has to be achieved by the creative individual. On the one hand he has to become equally responsive to the formal and the qualitative features of the objects with which he is concerning himself, and on the other he has to effect a corresponding co-ordination within his own subjective being by reconciling the functions of thought and feeling. Moreover, still another process of integration is entailed, since the effect of the successful performance of these two operations is that the distinction, experienced in the first place on the plane of ordinary sensory knowledge, between the subjective and the objective begins to be overcome.

Finally, to the degree that the individual succeeds in identifying himself with ideas of a universal type he emancipates himself from his biological consciousness and comes into communion with a host of other minds, incarnate and discarnate, who are united by their common acceptance of basic principles.

We must now carry our investigation further by considering more closely what this process of reconciliation entails.

## 2. *The Transcendence of Dualism*

The dual relation of the soul to externals, referred to above, cannot but suggest to the philosophically-minded observer that fundamentally the interior and the exterior are one. It is only at a certain relatively early stage of consciousness that the separation between the mind and its object, or between that which loves, and that by which love is drawn forth, imposes itself upon the mind.

Here one must again emphasize that dualism is fatal. The mental is only creatively experienced in close association with the qualitative, and *vice versa*. Yet a review of the past history of thought reveals that the intellect has a persistent tendency to divorce its productions from the phenomenal manifestations with which they should normally be conjoined.

To give a few examples, we have first of all the traditional Hinayana Buddhist conception of the world as consisting of a collection of impermanent aggregates, identification with which can lead only to suffering and bondage. For 'all is sorrow, change and illusion'. The only solution, therefore, is to escape from the Wheel of births and deaths by concentrating the mind upon that Nirvanic state which lies beyond all change, that one may finally enter a condition of peace and liberation. In other words, a radical separation is effected between consciousness and the world of the senses, response to which is thought of only as an obstacle to self-realization. Dualistic thinking could not, in fact, be carried further.

The corrective of this world-denying view is, I suggest, a more precise and realistic account of man's relation to the external realm. For if the principle is duly recognized that within impermanent material formations there are disclosed to us timeless ideas, or forms, the inadequacy of the doctrine becomes at once apparent. We then realize that within the realm of change we can enjoy, if we discipline our minds properly, a secure hold upon the changeless. This principle is, indeed, affirmed, although from a different standpoint, by the Mahayana Buddhists, who stress the importance of relating oneself to the Eternal without withdrawing from the phenomenal world.<sup>1</sup>

It will be evident that a similar separation of the mental from the

sensory vitiated the otherwise sublime philosophy of Plato. Reality was conceived of as a world of timeless Ideas, the character of which was only reflected in an imperfect and transient fashion in the phenomenal world. And as in the case of Buddhism, the effect of the doctrine was that a fatal limitation was imposed upon any possibility of creating a true synthesis between the permanent and the impermanent elements in our experience. Nor was the difficulty overcome later by the medieval scholastic philosophers, who failed to integrate the sensory with the intellectual in any satisfying sense, and as a consequence developed a seriously inadequate doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

And now in the present century we are again struggling with the problem of dualism by evolving ideas which compensate for the dualistic influence of Cartesianism. Our modern conception of man as a psycho-somatic being, even though it is interpreted at present in a very limited fashion, clearly paves the way for a creative reconciliation of the claims of the Within and the Without.

Let me now indicate some of the more significant ways in which these two aspects of being are connected. First of all, it can be seen that that process of psychological integration which is an essential condition of all mental and spiritual health is effected both in subjective and objective terms. With respect to the first aspect of the operation, what is entailed is always the regulation of subjective imagery. This can be effected on a more elementary level by psychological treatment, but we have seen that the process cannot be carried to any really advanced stage unless the person concerned undertakes deliberate exercises in the realm of Mental Science.

In other words, he must perfect himself in the art of synthesizing those mental impressions that he derives from the contemplation of the deeper and more permanent elements in reality with those that he receives from objects of sense of a relatively ephemeral character. It is not the place here to discuss the various techniques that can be undertaken in this field, but the basic principle at work will be sufficiently evident. And the effect, if they are applied successfully, is that the practitioner acquires an extremely flexible attitude to experience, so that he can do full justice to the immediate occasion, while yet seeing it in proper relation to far more extended aspects of being.

But, as we saw earlier (p. 102), this interior integration can never be achieved within the subjective sphere alone. Man is not a self-complete entity, but is open to the great world by which he is surrounded, and strictly dependent upon it when it is a question of resolving his private and personal problems. The images that he is seeking to correlate are necessarily drawn from his experience of an external realm, the outcome of contact with objects and forces outside himself. This applies both to those that he finds disturbing or seductive, and to those of a superior character which rise before his mind when he is engaged in religious or philosophical contemplation. Their emotional power derives from the fact that they are not of the order of mental abstractions, but are charged with the energy which results from the embodiment of ideas in matter.

Moreover, however salutary meditation may be as a psychological discipline, it remains true that no one can come properly to terms with his inner nature unless he works out his problems in terms of resolute and realistic dealings with the external world.<sup>2</sup> Nor can he escape this obligation unless he is the neurotic type of introvert whose emotions have never been healthily aroused. For in the first place one cannot expose oneself fully to life without one's feelings being powerfully stirred. And in the second place intense feelings impel one inescapably to some form of expression in action. This is surely a decisive indication of the fact that subjective and objective have a basically reciprocal character, and that it is fatal to create an arbitrary division between them.

Now another point. The formal features of objects correspond to the inner function of thought within the individual, while their qualitative features correspond to his emotional processes. Further, the formal and the qualitative are invariably given together in our physical experience. A closely parallel situation is offered by the fact that thought and feeling are no less intimately associated in the sphere of our inner life. We are certainly, as has appeared, obliged to allow for extreme states in which one predominates to a marked degree over the other, but the ideal condition is that in which they are brought into manifestation in conjunction—in the same way that as far as the outer world goes we ought properly to enjoy at all times a balanced vision of the ideal and the substantial aspects of objects.

Again, there is a very close connection between the ways in which



the material of our experience is organized in the subjective and the objective realms. It has already appeared that the principle of combination lies at the foundation both of ideas, objects and persons. The mark of an idea is that it unites a number of elements that can be considered either individually or in all sorts of other connections. And the situation is the same with an existent object, with the difference that the idea is now associated with a physical manifestation, known through the senses. While finally, the distinctive mark of a person is that he is a being who is capable of creating every sort of combination on the mental plane.

It is this parallelism, one must suggest, that accounts for the fact that, when not in an afflicted state, people respond so strongly to presentations in the outer world in which the element of integration is clearly manifested. As suggested in an earlier chapter, there is a significant connection between the person and the object as concretely experienced. Both of them when in a condition of harmonious organization exhibit the character of wholeness, of elements in an organic relation to one another. And both possess the character of *being*.

Another correspondence between the within and the without is revealed by the fact that when it comes to imposing order upon the raw material of experience we find that in both realms the process entailed is the same. The man who is executing a plan or design first of all acquires as full a knowledge as he can of the elements and substances that he proposes to organize. He then sees to it that although the character of each unit must be properly brought out, this must be accomplished only within the limits of the scheme that he is engaged in objectifying. According to the circumstances and the nature of the enterprise, he seeks to ensure that a piece of tapestry, a herbaceous border, a distempered wall, a human personality, an individual jewel, a dance, a domestic animal shall occupy and maintain its proper place within the system that he has conceived.

It is a significant fact that the same basic procedure is followed by a person whenever he is engaged in introducing order into his own inner life. In this case, however, the material on which he is working consists, not of physically existing things and people, but of *images* corresponding to them. The tendency of these images is to intrude, to assert themselves, to fuse together, to conflict in a disturbing

fashion, and to haunt the mind to such a degree that it becomes imperative both for one's own sake and that of others to submit them to regulation. But this can only be done if the one concerned is capable of conceiving and applying different kinds of patterns to which they can be subordinated. He must first have some idea of his policy and intentions and then try to live accordingly. This remains true, however fleeting and particular the psychological situation to which he is accommodating himself. The fundamental technique for us all is the control of imagery, which, as I have insisted earlier, is the very essence of all disciplines in the field of Mental Science.

What it comes to, therefore, is this. We are all responsive to two basic aspects of reality: the permanent and the impermanent. The obligation imposed upon us is that of reconciling our reactions to them at every point, and this in the most complete possible manner. And fundamentally it makes no difference whether we are doing this in the outer world by creating arrangements between physical objects, or in the inner world by creating arrangements between images so that each of them shall appear only in certain relations to others. So once again the distinction between the within and the without is revealed as being less radical than superficially appears. For the same laws are seen to be operative in both spheres.

The conclusion from all this is that we should seek to cultivate a state of mind in which our realization of the complementary character of subjective and objective manifestations is preserved as completely as possible. Conversely, it should be easy to perceive that whenever a person conceives of objects as existing in complete independence of his own being he is separating himself from reality. For as a direct consequence his attention is necessarily concentrated on the plane of the material. The tangible, the apparent, the measurable and the precisely describable dominate the picture. The distinctive mark of this approach which, as we saw earlier (pp. 46-7), is essentially that of the scientist, is that the deeper nature of the object under examination is merely *inferred* from the discoveries that are made about it on the physical level. There is no penetration into its essence, such as is involved in the processes of mental and emotional identification discussed above. On the contrary it is, as it were, seen cold, inspected judicially from the outside.

And there is a corresponding effect upon the observer. For by a

psychological necessity he finds himself obliged, so far as he cultivates this attitude of mind, to think of himself as separated from the object he is considering. It appears as something existing in independence of himself which he, another independent entity, is submitting to scrutiny. This follows naturally from the fact that, as remarked above, it lies in the nature of physical matter that it produces an effect of distance and separation between objects.

To use the mind on this plane, therefore, is to cut oneself off from the possibility of achieving any interior unity between the self and that which is the object of its attention. Nor is this all, for it is also not difficult to see that so far as the observer is confining his attention to externals he is engaged only with the realm of outer effects and appearances. These are notoriously deceptive, with the result that the method has any effective application only when it is a question of studying phenomena of a purely material order. Hence the greatest triumphs of science are achieved in the field of physics and chemistry, since in this realm the objects under examination simply *are*, to all intents and purposes, the sum of their physical characteristics. But it is a very different matter when a physical situation—such as the bodily condition of a human being—is a reflex, or a precipitation, of an inner condition (which is necessarily extremely complicated) to which the scientific investigator has no direct access. His knowledge in this case is of a very uncertain character. It may be exact in its own sphere, but it throws no sure light on the deeper nature of what he is examining.

Moreover, we can consider this situation on another level. We have already seen that all material configurations are impermanent. But it has also appeared that the intellect conducts its operations in the realm of the permanent. Hence, whenever it has reached the point by a process of intense contemplation of penetrating to the essential form of an object it may be said to be apprehending it in the eternal mode. And similarly intense emotional identification with it results also in union with its deeper nature. This is the source of the profound satisfaction enjoyed by spiritually-minded philosophers and lovers: they both know that they have associated themselves with that which is enduring in the object of their contemplation.

On the other hand the purely scientific student of the higher forms of life is committed by his method to occupying himself with its

impermanent manifestations, and as a consequence is precluded from experiencing it except in terms of 'otherness' which involves, as we have seen, an exclusion from the sphere of reality.

### 3. *The Problem of Process*

Before we consider man's experience of organic realities we must first take account of yet another way in which he can limit his relation to the external world. Although he has a natural impulse to respond to manifestations in which the formal and the qualitative receive equal expression, he is only too easily seduced, particularly in this present age, by the appeal of abstract thinking, developed most notably in the field of modern science. I have already, in an earlier chapter, commented upon its effect in limiting the individual's response to the wider aspects of experience.

At this point in our enquiry it will be appropriate to give an example of the somewhat subtle fashion in which the scientist's concern with the formal aspects of knowledge limits his conception of the problem with which he is dealing. I refer to the very interesting treatment by investigators of the problem of process, or continuity within change, which was discussed in an earlier chapter from another point of view.

Up to very recently physicists were continuing to gain valuable results by dealing with matter in terms of quantitative units. In the Cartesian tradition they made effective use of concepts such as mass, length, time and velocity. They have now reached the point, however, of perceiving that this approach left out altogether the important element of *form*. And now by directing their attention to this factor they are opening the door to very fruitful possibilities that were neglected by earlier investigators, and this not only in the field of physics, but also in those of biology and psychology. The essence of the matter is that practically all forms in Nature, as well as those created by man, develop in an orderly fashion through time—as with, for instance, the growth of a tree or of a human being. And by studying such forms and observing the successive phases that they display we can gain new and valuable insights into what may be termed cosmic structure. (The interested reader is referred to a pioneer volume in this fascinating field: *Aspects of Form*, Ed. Lancelot

Whyte, Lund Humphries, 1951.)

Now since formal continuity is disclosed to us within a realm of change, the problem as it presents itself to the modern physicist is that of correlating forms with the matter within which they are discerned. Thus on the one hand the developing structure of a growing plant can be observed, while on the other it is possible to describe with scientific accuracy its physical components and their properties. So what it comes to is that the formal is being related to the material, or the quantitative. And as a result our conceptions in this field are being transformed in a very interesting fashion.

At the same time, however, we must not lose sight of the fact that what we are concerned with in this matter is a revolution only in the scientist's way of looking at his facts. By relating developing form to quantity he has altered his perspectives in a fashion which carries considerable possibilities for the future. But it remains true that he is still confined within the domain of scientific thinking. For the quantitative is itself only an abstraction from our total experience of the material. At the best he is but paving the way in his own particular field for a more complete synthesis that must be established between the formal and the *qualitative*.

The point to note is that both in respect to form and quantity the scientific investigator is occupied only with purely intellectual description. A shape can be photographed and its dimensions measured, while in the same way the physical and chemical composition of the object concerned can also be precisely recorded. But in both cases the emotional nature and its responses are left entirely out of account. It is simply a question of working with theorems of a new type. When, however, the matter or substance of objects is considered from the standpoint of the feelings that it arouses within the spectator, while their formal aspect is taken account of at the same time, we become concerned with a synthesis of a more significant type. For it is now a question of correlating our mental and our emotional processes, of reconciling the permanent with the impermanent on a much deeper level. What this entails will by now be sufficiently clear to the reader, and he will perceive, I think, that 'process' as conceived of from the scientific standpoint, although a very important conception, has only a limited application.

On a much cruder level indifference to the significance of the

concrete finds expression in the alarming abuse of technology that we are witnessing today all over the world. Its essence lies in a ruthless concern with securing, in the cause of 'efficiency', a powerful control over the mechanical and manipulable elements in every situation over which the technician can secure command. And of course the violation of the organic wholeness of experience that is involved is most apparent when he becomes engaged with the realm of the biological and the human. Nature, seen through the clear but incredibly limited lens of his consciousness, is degraded to the level of raw material to be exploited to the maximum degree for the realization of his commercial and scientific aims. As an object of loving care and a source of spiritual experience it practically ceases to exist. While naturally, so far as he attempts to apply the same cold-blooded technique in the field of what he chooses to describe as 'human engineering', the conflict between the mechanical and the vital becomes even more extreme—to the point, in fact, of inviting ultimately a mass revolt on the part of the men and women who are being stage by stage enslaved by the system.

If now we turn to the field of philosophy we find that thinkers of the idealist school fail to assign sufficient importance to our experience of the immediate. This theme has been discussed earlier (p. 48 *seq.*). Here I will add only the observation that the essence of the matter is that the intelligible is more real for them than the sensible, the formal than the qualitative. As a result they are incapable of acknowledging the full significance of the embodied. Hence we find that although in the history of philosophy there have been the fiercest discussions respecting the sense in which a universal can be known within the individual thing, only a few of those who have contributed to it have been sufficiently sensitive (as was Coleridge) to the poetic element in our experience to realize the true nature of the disclosure that is made to us whenever we contemplate ideas with a full responsiveness to the qualities with which they have become associated through their embodiment in a material form. The tendency, rather, is to think of the intelligible as something that is rescued through the activity of the mind from its dark and confusing material setting and lifted up by the contemplative into the clear light of intellectual day, disembarassed of the elements that previously limited our appreciation of its nature.<sup>3</sup>

#### 4. *Conclusion*

The review undertaken in the present chapter will have made it clear that the problem of reconciling the permanent and the impermanent elements in our experience is one that presents us with the most serious difficulties on all planes. It remains, in the further chapters of this book, to explore the possibilities that are offered us in the way of integrating the life of the mind and that of the senses, that a condition of being may be enjoyed in which the conflict between them ceases to be acute, and the first phases of true organic consciousness are experienced as a result.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NATURE OF ORGANIC AWARENESS

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#### I. *The Meaning of Sublimation*

THE REVIEW UNDERTAKEN in the last chapter will have prepared the way for a consideration of what is entailed when objective manifestations are experienced with a full regard to the totality of the aspects they present.

To begin with, let me again emphasize the fact that in the field of our normal earthly experience form and content are presented to us invariably in conjunction. We cannot by any effort of will, or by any manipulation of the images in our minds, prevent ourselves from perceiving them together. A yellow cube, for instance, is 'given' us as such in its completeness and immediacy. It is only through subsequent analysis that we distinguish between its colour and its form.

This persistent association of the intelligible and the sensible (or the permanent and the impermanent) has some interesting implications. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, we are so constituted that we derive a deep satisfaction from both orders of manifestation, and suffer correspondingly if we are unduly deprived of either. Again, we cannot but conclude that any violation of the natural wholeness of our experience, either in the direction of abstract thinking in science and philosophy, or in that of a surrender to sensationalism, will have serious psychological consequences, even though they may not always be superficially evident. Man is in his deeper being a unity, and the implication is that his nature can be fundamentally satisfied only by the contemplation of phenomena in which the element of the organic finds full expression. Undue concern with selected aspects of experience is only an invitation to neurosis.

Why do unspoiled natural phenomena and successful works of art



exercise such a tranquillizing and healing effect upon our minds? Because both sides of our nature are being satisfied in unity. Conversely, anyone who achieves any marked degree of interior integration will as a result become capable of responding to externals on a high plane, so that he enters on occasion into a condition of what can only be described as transcendental illumination—the experience of the poets and mystics amongst us. Such is the natural and inescapable result of achieving any close reconciliation between the Within and the Without.

Now as to the processes that are actually involved in integral apprehension. First of all, it entails a direct and living response to the immediate. This, as will be obvious, is an essential for the production of good poetry, for the establishing of creative relations with other human beings, and for effective and discriminating action. The person concerned must be actually *here*, his consciousness fully directed upon the transient manifestation before him. For only the immediate can be truly experienced. Memory, anticipation and reports at second-hand relate only to weaker and more uncertain equivalents of the momentary but living conjuncture. Nothing but what is actually before us can be said to have full reality for our minds. For only then is the subjective-objective relationship truly established.

When anyone achieves such a surrender to the immediately present his emotional nature is fully active. For, as we have seen, only through emotional liberation can the impermanent be properly experienced. The qualitative with its basis in matter or substance, must be permitted to exercise its vitalizing influence on the soul.

If this were all, however, the individual would be nothing more than an unilluminated sensationalist. The balancing factor is, of course, the intellect, which should be active at the same time in placing the ephemeral, but crucial, phenomenon in a wider and sobering context. This process presents several important aspects, some of which are of a rather subtle character.

We have seen earlier that in all creative thinking the qualitative, although it is accorded full recognition, is duly subordinated to the formal. The alternative is sensationalism, sentimentality, obscurity and chaos. Reason (understood in its widest sense) is sovereign, since in all our activities we are bound to respect the principle of order as

it finds expression in different connections. Yet at the same time sensitiveness to form is of little profit to us unless it is conjoined with the power of identifying ourselves decisively with the realm of the changing in the mode of love, and thereby entering into a deeper condition of being than that into which our mental activity alone can initiate us. So the intellect must be recognized as the ruler of an empire in which we can only dwell through conformity to a deeper principle. Without divine philosophy we are lost, yet under its guidance we enjoy realizations of a profound order that only full emotional responsiveness can place within our reach.

The situation involved is of deep significance, and is that which determines the tense and subtle relation existing between the two basic powers of the soul, the Animus and the Anima, so thoroughly and sensitively explored by students of Jung's psychology. Animus is a commanding and aristocratic principle, which must never, so far as its authority as a regulating and balancing force in the psyche is concerned, permit itself to be determined by the character of the protean realm over which it exercises control. One may say that its gaze is directed steadfastly upwards towards the Absolute, and that it declines to be determined in any way by the character of that deceptive and alluring realm of lunar flux within which Anima expresses her nature. Yet as the outcome of this uncompromising idealism it becomes endowed with the power of attracting to itself the ardent co-operation of its partner, for whom the meaning of life resides in love, and who delights to pour herself into the forms which she herself is incapable of creating. This strange and profoundly mystical relation between the twin powers of the soul was defined by Swedenborg in a striking fashion when he wrote in his *Divine Love and Wisdom* that 'the Love by its Affections joins itself to the Understanding, and that the Understanding does not join itself to any Affection of the Love'—an observation which drew forth the approval of Blake.

Yet the reverse aspect of this situation must also be properly appreciated. Masculine intellect without the co-operation of feminine love remains completely helpless and sterile, the cold creator of abstract conceptions that in spite of their perfection lack all vital content. The formal is impotent until it is energized by the co-operating principle of sympathy. And this implies that women must

not only be directed in respect of the formal aspects of existence by the man (for such is his right and privilege), but also courted, cherished and protected by him. Further, he has also at the cost of much discipline and suffering to overcome his innate egotism to the point of acknowledging that the female is by her nature initiated into a wisdom of the 'heart' that is complementary to that impersonal wisdom which is his own august heritage. It is the wisdom which expresses itself in an acute sensitiveness to the demands and possibilities of the changing, that realm of materiality and impermanence in which the feminine side of the nature is essentially at home. For love does not manifest in the abstract, but is drawn out powerfully by the passing occasion, and the 'genius' of Anima lies in her deep realization of its significance.

I would submit that the system of organic philosophy that is expounded in the present essay provides an adequate foundation for this vindication of the neglected feminine principle. For its basic postulate, as the reader is aware, is that the unchanging and the changing are of absolutely equal significance as expressions of the Reality which lies behind the world of manifestation. While it emphasizes the superior and regulative function of the formal, it also accords full weight to the fact that the material and the vital provide that substance without which the ideal remains abstract and unactualized.

The relation between the formal and the vital is of deep interest. It is not simply that clear and positive conceptions when held steadily in the mind impose a salutary limitation upon our unregulated emotional urges. For we have also to allow for the fact that forms exert upon substance a strange power of magnetic attraction, an uprush from the deep regions of the so-called Unconscious. As we have seen, the feminine cleaves naturally to the masculine. The clearly defined symbol becomes the focus for an inflow of responsive sympathy. The emotional side of the nature is helpless unless it can be provided by the intellect with matrices into which its unorganized energies can pour. Nor are we involved in this matter with psychological processes only, for due account must be paid to the principle recognized by esotericists that natural forces are subject to the will of the adept, who achieves his purposes by holding before his mind symbols which through the workings of cosmic law call up and

control (however fantastic this may appear to the 'educated' person of today) the activities of the elemental spirits.

The ideal condition, as can be seen, is one in which the formal and the substantial exercise complementary functions, without abstraction in one direction or excess and intemperance in the other. Thus in creative writing, speaking, singing or acting we find that lucid and firmly held mental conceptions are vitalized and substantialized by a continuous inflow of psychical energy, imparting to them a warmth and poetic richness which they would otherwise lack—a conjugal manifestation of the masculine and the feminine principles.

It follows, therefore, that the basic key to creative activity in all realms lies in the perfection of a somewhat subtle technique by which in every moment of our waking existence we can keep our attention concentrated *primarily* upon the formal aspect of the manifestations that are being presented to us—with, of course, a full recognition of the qualitative elements entailed. This discipline, properly practised, enables the individual to 'live in Eternity' in a much more complete sense than the process is traditionally conceived of. For it is not simply a question of maintaining an unbroken association in the contemplative mode with an inner realm of timeless being which is never brought into a dynamic relation with externals, but of also associating ourselves positively with the permanent so far as it is disclosed to us in the forms and rhythms by which our actual sensory experiences are organized, controlled and sublimated. In other words, the changing and the changeless are reconciled in the field of living and organic experience.

## 2. *Actual and Ideal*

We must now consider some of the more important ways in which a responsiveness to the organic finds expression in transforming a person's attitude to life.

First of all, he will have no difficulty in perceiving that all the phenomena with which we are confronted in the external world, however seemingly diverse they may be, are connected together in some deep inner realm of being. This realization is, indeed, not very remarkable, since it is attained to by every serious religious thinker.

But it is certainly of fundamental importance. All is in essence (but only in essence) one. In particular, the principle has to be accepted that the highest manifestations in our experience are indis severably bound up with the lowest. Here one must again stress the significance of the Kabbalistic affirmation, referred to earlier, that Kether is in Malkuth, and Malkuth in Kether. It works out, therefore, that High Mass, the Parthenon, the Sistine Madonna, and all else that belongs to this elevated sphere cannot be detached from the sewers, the purulent discharges, the offal, the vermin, and the host of other unpleasant manifestations that belong to the depths of incarnation. And, as will appear later, the relation between such different orders of phenomena can only be rendered properly intelligible in the light of the principle of Hierarchy.

With respect to responsiveness to the organic generally, one must note that it finds expression in a growing sensitiveness to the visible and hidden affiliations of the objects, beings or situations with which a person finds himself at any given moment in relation. A principle is active within his consciousness which prevents him from conceiving of it in a limited fashion, or making use of it for unduly restricted purposes. The realizations entailed may not be brought into full awareness, but they are nevertheless there. On a more familiar level it is a question only of such factors as liberal-mindedness, cultural sensitiveness, human consideration, or a prudent regard for less obvious commitments and outworkings. But such responsiveness to implications can be carried very much further, so that it entails at a certain point the exercise of a prophetic faculty—by which I mean that the inspired observer, or active participant, is moved to take account of the operation of spiritual influences of a refined and elusive type and becomes sensitive to latent and veiled elements in the manifestation before him and to its secret affinities with others with which it has no superficial connections. Perception is, in fact, extended into the domain of the esoteric.

A simple example of how this interiorization takes place. In the cultural sphere we have to reckon with the extreme tensions, adaptations and transformations involved in the accommodation of the mind to ideas that have been evolved by other thinkers, both in our own epoch and in earlier periods of history. This battle, we have become accustomed to believe, is fought out essentially on the

mental plane. As far as our contemporaries are concerned we naturally perceive that our issues are primarily with living men and women like ourselves. But in respect to the past we assume that we are engaged only in the evaluation of 'ideas'. As a result of the materialistic bias which is so characteristic of our age, only relatively few who are open to interior spiritual intimations realize that concentration on ideas, whatever their nature may be, entails subjective psychical rapport with those, both living and dead, by whom they were originally propounded. The mental aspect of the association is detached from the more complete and vital experience of which it is a part. And the picture which we form of our cultural relations is limited accordingly.

Again, spiritual vision makes for a liberation from one's immediate experience of what is before one. I mean that the observer will not only be able to survey adequately the past history of an object or a living being, while taking note also of what features it possesses at the present moment, but he will be capable also of divining prophetically the nature of its ultimate destiny, its entelechy. In other words, he will up to a point be capable of relating himself to it in its noumenal aspect, considering only in a subordinate sense the successive phases which it exhibits in the course of its passage through time. For one who has attained to some measure of seership it is indeed true that the beginning is in the end, and the end in the beginning. This is a particular manifestation of that responsiveness to wholes which is the distinctive mark of organic consciousness.

Finally, we have to consider the mental condition of the person who has succeeded, in a measure at least, in synthesizing his experience of the general and the particular. He may be described as existing in an 'intermediate' state.<sup>1</sup> For although his intellect is active in examining and recombining ideas in a detached and impersonal fashion, his active identification with what is before him ensures the free expression of his emotional nature. Yet if the attitude is properly maintained his thinking will not be inhibited by disturbing emotional influences, nor will his feeling be sterilized by the deadening influence of the theoretical. On the contrary, he will remain poised in a condition of equilibrium in which detachment and commitment, calm and sympathy, indifference and active potency are closely integrated with one another. He will be at once

fully present and thus be able to respond to the demands of the actual situation, and yet in another sense so removed from it that he might be said to be dealing with it by 'remote control'. While the passionate element in his nature will lead him to be fully immersed in the turbulent stream of life, his capacity to retain in the process his full mental freedom will make it possible for him to bring to bear upon the immediate problem a wide range of remembered experiences as well as subscribed convictions, and thus deal with it in a sane perspective.

Here again, I am concerned, not only with that order of realism and sobriety which is manifested by the mature, but with a condition of mental-emotional equilibrium that opens the door to ecstasy, illumination and a release from egotism that cannot be attained by the more conventional disciplines. It will be obvious, in fact, that a technique is involved which has close affinities with that practised by the Zen Buddhists, whose sovereign aim is to realize the Within and the Without as one, without prejudice to either. What we are here engaged with, however, is a western form of this discipline, with certain differences in emphasis as a result.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. *The Domain of Action*

We must now consider more closely the expression of organic consciousness in the field of action. The mark of this realm is that a supreme opportunity is provided for integrating the emotional and the mental elements in one's being. For immediacy is at its maximum, while at the same time there is nothing in principle to prevent the mind from being exalted to the highest plane.

At the same time it will be evident that the situation presents the individual with some rather subtle problems in adaptation, arising from the relation between the familiar and the unfamiliar elements in our experience. For we have already recognized that in the nature of the case thought, which is formal, is necessarily inadequate to life, which is spontaneous, dynamic and emergent. We can relate ourselves creatively to it only by responding emotionally to its subtle and ever-changing manifestations, by a sensitiveness to the qualitative aspect of the world around us.

One can easily understand, therefore, why such intuitives as poets,

mystics and practitioners of Zen Buddhism regard conceptual thinking as being nothing more than an obstacle to an appreciation of the uniqueness of the passing moment. For to reason and reflect is to relate the immediate to the abstract, to grind it to dust between the twin millstones of the intellectually organized past and the speculatively envisaged future.

Attractive as this doctrine is, it is not difficult to see that it provides us with only a partial account of the truth. For the fact is that no situation, whatever novel and surprising features it may present, can ever be altogether new. We have accepted the principle that in our experience the permanent and the impermanent are inseparably conjoined. In other words the familiar and the unfamiliar are presented to us in conjunction. Confronted with any phenomenon, we find on the one hand that it possesses recognizable formal features, and that on the other we are in the presence of a living reality which has only just come into existence—or rather, which is continually coming into existence and changing into something else. For the distinctive feature of life is that it never for an instant stands still. Hence what we see before us is always something that is at once old and new.

It follows, therefore, that a mature reaction to externals implies an accommodation both to the formal and to the sensory aspects of the object. As far as the first element is concerned, this means that the observer recognizes from his past experience that it possess features that can be classified under various heads. As the case may be, he perceives that a particular animal is a horse, a panther or an ant-eater, that a particular machine is a typewriter of a certain design, that a mathematical theorem relates to elliptic functions, that a sentence is written in Spanish and conveys such-and-such a meaning.

Now it is true that in this procedure the individual is drawing upon images in his mind that were accumulated in the course of a past which is now dead in relation to the vital present. But it is also no less true that were they not brought to bear upon the immediate living situation it would remain unintelligible, and the observer in relation to it would be more or less in the condition of a dog which, finding itself confronted with, say, a piece of scientific apparatus, registers its sensory qualities, but understands nothing regarding the principle according to which its parts are associated.<sup>3</sup> In other



words, the present when severed from the past is a very incomplete type of manifestation. For the observer himself is thereby deprived of all the experience that has led to his becoming a mature and responsible personality, and is reduced to the level of a wondering child, entranced by a spectacle that is beyond his comprehension.

To whatever degree a person surrenders to the miraculous newness of a situation, he will still respond to it as an individual with a particular mental and emotional history, and therefore by his reaction to it bring into existence something which is determined both by its distinctive character and by his own. This factor, it must be remarked, is usually disregarded by the existentialistic mystic, who lays all the emphasis upon the uniqueness of the object that is being contemplated—as if the uniqueness of the observer did not have to be acknowledged in equal measure!

Response to the emergent is not, therefore, by itself enough. We must also do proper justice to those of its features which it possessed in earlier phases of its existence, which it will continue to possess later, and which are possessed also by other objects. In other words, it must be considered from the formal standpoint.

This of course brings with it a serious danger. Conservatism may triumph over response to novelty; the past may blind the eye to the significance of the present; expectation may limit one's power of discernment; what ought to be may render one insensitive to what actually is. In respect of such dangers we must agree fully with the existentialist that in order to adjust ourselves to the emergent we must abandon all preconception, and open ourselves fully to what is miraculously before us.

On the other hand it is no less clear that—another aspect of the matter to which airy enthusiasts for spontaneity usually make no allusion—there is an equally important side of one's nature that is expressed in the sober acknowledgment of the persistent and the continuous. What is 'character' but the effect of unwaveringly accepting the claims upon one of the past and the future? The developed spirit not only keeps himself open to the unprecedented, but also submits unprotestingly to monotony, routine and the discipline involved in all those tasks that call for patient attention. Is not the man of science making an invaluable contribution to culture in demonstrating the way in which invariables come into our

experience in the fields of physics and chemistry? Or a judge rendering society a service by placing a case against the background of legal history? Further, it is surely plain that unless individual manifestations can be referred to some general framework of knowledge they assume a merely episodic and anecdotal character. In a word, the particular divorced from the general is no serious object of contemplation for an adult mind.

The old and the new are inseparably associated. What now is appears necessarily as a variant of what was, and what later will be. It follows, therefore, that the 'realistic' thinker will be called upon to cultivate a discerning attitude of mind which will enable him to bring his accumulated knowledge and experience to bear upon the emergent situations with which he is confronted, while acknowledging their peculiar value. His theory and practice will be co-ordinated to a degree which the average person is incapable of achieving. How does this work out in relation to the philosophy we are discussing?

The first point to note is that, as with the manifestation of the Poetic Reason, the intellectual processes are sublimated. Logical analysis alone is inadequate for the achieving of a discriminating adjustment to externals. What comes into play in this case is the activity of an intuitive faculty which enables the individual to take account in a comprehensive and indescribable manner of a whole range of factors in the situation, and this not serially, but in one act of apprehension. His response is to the phenomenon in its comprehensiveness, and not to its elements considered analytically in isolation. It is only in retrospect that the constituents of the problem can to some degree be identified. Moreover, there is an emotional exaltation involved, resulting from the direct participation that is achieved with the dynamic processes of life.

Again, it is the mark of a developed personality that he has established in his mind certain general ideas, or principles, that he acknowledges under all circumstances. He realizes that his acceptance of any of them may not imply any deep understanding of cosmic laws, but he does at least know from experience that they enable him to impose upon his behaviour a creative pattern. Further, it is of no great consequence whether his beliefs in this realm exist in a systematized form, or whether their acknowledg-

ment is for the most part intermittent and implicit. The essential point is that they exercise a regulative effect upon his activities. In other words, he fully respects what I have earlier referred to as the Scheme of existence.

This acknowledgment of the fundamentals of experience must be carefully distinguished from respect for ordinary social and cultural conventions. They cannot of course be disregarded by even the most imperious spirit. But the fact remains that the mark of every really creative thinker is that instead of expressing himself by formal accommodation to an existing historical tradition (in the manner, for instance, of the neo-classicists), he develops his ideas in relation to a scheme of knowledge which has a perennial character and is constituted by the basic acknowledgments of the wise throughout the ages. Is it not such regard for enduring verities that renders writers like Shakespeare, Goethe or Tolstoi 'great'?

As to the building of this system of basic constataions, it may be worth remarking that it is not simply a matter of co-ordinating the past with the present. For what has been preserved from the past as the result of reflection and intellectual formulation is in existence for the individual *now*, not in the form of memories primarily, but as an element in his mental constitution. He has raised it out of the domain of the temporal into that of the eternal. And his task is to bring it to bear effectively upon still further manifestations that are presented to him in the realm of time. 'We are thus in this matter concerned with a continual process of conversion and re-application. Physical sensations are sublimated through reflection into mental concepts, and these concepts again affect the manner in which the person responds to novel experiences. At the same time his resulting behaviour will itself serve later as material for the further shaping of his general philosophy. Hence the character of his inner mental world is continually being transformed as the outcome of the passage of his ideas through the medium of matter—much as an asthmatic subject will inbreathe again some of the air he has exhaled, but modified by some aromatic vapour calculated to benefit his lungs.

This process of passing the extensive back into itself through the intensive affords yet another illustration of the intimate connection existing between the inside and the outside of our world. And in the psychological realm there is also evidently involved a close

synthesis between the mental and the emotional elements in the person's being, for reasons which will by now be sufficiently apparent to the reader.

We must now consider what is actually involved when a creative thinker is presented with a novel situation—by which I mean a situation which is novel for *him*, and may not necessarily of course be novel for those who have a different history. If, for instance, you have never travelled by air, your first flight is bound to be an 'experience', however indifferent the other passengers may be to the trip. In other words, you will be called upon to adapt yourself to an unfamiliar combination of elements.

The mature individual approaches such a novel presentation fortified by that system of general and relatively permanent ideas which represents, as I have remarked, the organized distillation of his past experience. If he has a gift for creative extemporization he then evolves an idea (or a series of ideas) that is on the one hand consistent with those already established in his mind and on the other does proper justice to what is immediately being presented to his attention. One may say that a transition is effected from strategy to tactics, which are (or should be) consistent with one another. In other words, a new idea is evolved that embraces both the past and the present—or more exactly, both *his* past and *his* present.

Achievement in this field can have great charm. For the mind is able to display its native capacity for swift and free creativeness, producing effortlessly in favourable circumstances the combination of ideas that is precisely appropriate to the occasion. And at the same time this felicitousness is a higher accomplishment than the mere play of fancy in the void, since it is manifested with a delicate regard to the actualities of the situation. But this, again, means that the emotional side of the nature has been given free expression. So it is evident that sensitiveness in action implies that thought and feeling, the permanent and the impermanent, the within and the without, have been integrated through the conjoint activity of the two sides of the nature.

But in the case of the person who is spiritually awakened the picture can present a deeper aspect. In the first place, the ideas that he is expressing are of a more subtle character, since they imply respect for hidden and organic connections between phenomena

that are only perceived when the mind has been mystically quickened. And in the second place his sensitiveness to ephemeral manifestations is also enhanced. Hence anyone who has been following this path for a certain time finds himself living in a world which in many respects is widely different from that of which the ordinary man or woman is aware. It works out, in fact, that he is obliged to relate a deeper system of ideas to a series of manifestations that are perceived by him in an increasingly 'vital' fashion—in other words, in such a way that he is acutely conscious of the less obvious features that they display, and of their intricately changing relations to one another. The effect is that his responsiveness both to the permanent and the impermanent elements in every situation is markedly increased. But at the same time since his mind is concentrated primarily upon the principle which unifies them, the two aspects become ever more completely reconciled.

Further, one must recognize that the immediate moment is of deep metaphysical significance. Forces act only in the present, and this is true on the spiritual plane as well as on the physical. One can both express and receive only in relation to what is presented to one precisely *now*, which is the only point of time at which the power of the Creator comes into manifestation for us decisively. While all living things radiate certain influences more or less continuously, the electrical moment of *contact* occurs only when, in one way or another, they find themselves in propinquity. Energy is released at those points at which beings achieve a momentary identification with others.

Again, so far as action is undertaken on what may be termed the transcendental plane, the attitude of a person to his own activity will be considerably modified. For psychologically he will maintain himself in that subtle 'intermediate' state, referred to above, in which purposiveness and indifference are reconciled.

A further point. The integrated personality will have attained to a condition in which he perceives that positive and negative, projection and reception, affirmation and response are in essence one process. Hence, he will to an increasing degree experience every transaction between himself and any other entity—even if it be so lowly in the hierarchical order as a stone—as much from its own standpoint as from his own. To this psychological transvaluation

I have already made reference. Empathy dissolves externality, revealing the illusoriness of the distinction between within and without.

It follows that the person who has become sensitive in this way to what may be described as the hetero-centric factor in experience will no longer be able to think of himself as either acting upon or influenced by other beings in any exclusive sense. He will be conscious of the fact that as he gives, so also does he receive, and that agent and patient are in essence one. In other words, there is always at work a process of mutual modification. One must even affirm, for instance, that it is only the grossness of our physical senses that prevents us from realizing that an object is imperceptibly modified through being closely attended to by a human mind! Conversely, one is certainly subtly changed by passively permitting any object to radiate its distinctive force upon one.

In the same way there is a deep correspondence between the powerful urge within each of us to self-expression and the external conditions that provide a field for its manifestation. The concept of 'the fitness of the environment' has deep metaphysical implications. As Santayana has pointed out, the complement of a Platonic idea is a feminine matrix in which it can be received.<sup>4</sup> The ideal is actualized through the loving embrace of matter. It is only superficial forms of religion that fail to make proper provision for the mystical function of the Great Mother.

The kind of apprehensions of which I am speaking culminate eventually in the realization that we all dwell fundamentally in a state of being in which the separation which is imposed upon us by the physical senses between subjective and objective, inside and outside, past and present, myself and others, is completely overcome. But this represents the completion of a long and arduous spiritual pilgrimage.

Nor again will the person at this stage remain satisfied with the idea of preserving his psychological balance simply by a judicious alteration between different types of activity. Although this process of compensation is healthy enough up to a point, it remains true that he will transcend increasingly the condition of mind in which his diverse ways of expressing himself appear as being separated from one another—as they are, for instance, by the raw student for whom the study and the football field constitute two distinct and

alternating worlds. More and more does the awakening mystic come to live in a state in which there is but one activity for him with its various modalities, while at the same time activity itself is correlated with an inner non-activity which preserves the soul from being seduced by its appeal.

Action when undertaken on this transcendental plane presents, of course, numbers of other aspects, some of them of great interest, but it is not within the plan of this work to discuss them here.

#### 4. Conclusion

A word in conclusion respecting the final section of this book. The reader who has had the patience to follow the argument up to this point may well conclude that the theme we have been exploring has now been worked out in sufficient detail—perhaps, indeed, with exhausting thoroughness. Nevertheless, I must insist on the fact that our survey will not be complete until we have examined with some care the character of *wholes*.

The point is this. So far we have been concerned only with the *general* character of the integrated individual's response to the external world. We have seen that he synthesizes in a measure the mental and the emotional elements in his being and develops as a result an increased sensitiveness both to the changing and the changeless aspects of reality. But we have not yet examined at all closely the way in which *individual* objects and situations in the outer world present themselves to him as a result of the liberation that he has achieved. Although it has been repeatedly suggested that the actually existent object is invested with great metaphysical significance, no attempt has so far been made to indicate with any precision in what its organic character consists.

Moreover, we have still not yet considered the important question of the place occupied by individual objects in wider systems, and the momentous problems raised by the relation of the person to the community of which he is a member.

This further enquiry will now be undertaken, and will lead us finally to the conclusion that what may be described as the structure of our spiritual experience can only be properly understood in terms of a hierarchical system.

## CHAPTER X

# THE UNIT AND THE WHOLE

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IN THE PRESENT chapter I shall discuss the general character of organic formations as a preparation for a later consideration of the different types of wholes that we meet with in our experience.

### 1. *The Function of the Unit*

There will be no difficulty in perceiving that if the meaning of a whole lies in the fact that it is a combination, or unification of parts, it will possess reality only to the extent that the parts themselves can claim to have a valid character. If all the elements involved are fictitious, the totality will be fictitious also. And if some of them are fictitious, then the character of the whole will be impaired accordingly. The same also when the whole contains parts that are imperfect. There will be a certain achievement in the way of integration and a corresponding manifestation of power, but those effects which derive from complete unification will be lacking. A simple example would be a printed page on which there are misprints; the blemishes, minor though they are, spoil the total effect that is produced.

Now as to the parts themselves. To what degree is our knowledge of them really to be trusted? We have seen earlier (p. 57) that as far as the epistemological problem goes we have grounds for believing that we have a valid acquaintance with objects existing in the external world, even though it is conditioned to a marked degree by the nature of our psycho-physical organisms. Thus, we have to conclude that even though, say, an oak tree is not what it seems to be, it is undoubtedly in some sense real. The essential point is that the images which form in our minds when we are looking at it do at least correspond to its structure, in the sense that they do not correspond to the structure of, for instance, a house.

To this we must now add that, however conditioned our contact



with externals may be, the principle can be safely accepted that our knowledge of the individual units in a complex *is of a more dependable character than our knowledge of the complex as a whole.* This is sufficiently indicated by the fact that when a person is uncertain regarding the nature of any particular system of ideas—a machine, the thesis of a book, a sonata, a political programme—he re-examines carefully the elements of which it is composed before making up his mind about what they signify collectively.

In concerning himself with them individually he is on relatively sure ground. In respect of all the intellectual problems confronting us we have to allow for a multiplicity of viewpoints, diagnoses, estimates and opinions. But however much they may differ from one another, they do at least agree in acknowledging the existence of what is under dispute. In fact, unless this foundation was provided in commonly accepted knowledge there would be no basis for conflicting views at all. The primary purpose of every guide book is to list objects which are assumed to be there, on the plane of ordinary common sense at least, for everyone who reads it intelligently. The rest is a matter of interpretation and evaluation, regarding which, of course, far less certainty prevails.

A simple example is provided by relativity theory. Under certain circumstances two flashes of lightning which appear as being simultaneous to one observer may appear to be separated in time to another who is located elsewhere. But the flashes themselves will have the same characteristics for each, or at least any differences between them will have no significance as far as the mathematical aspect of the problem comes into account. And the same, of course, with light signals received by observers on different planes. Whatever relativistic elements are involved, the signals are conceived of as being the same type of phenomenon for all concerned.

Such is the situation with respect to the world of our ordinary experience. Certain sensory impressions must be accepted by us all as the elementary counters with which we play the hazardous Game of Life. They are to be regarded as the bricks of the house that every man jack of us is called upon to build. And it is of fundamental importance that while scepticism regarding the manifold ways in which they can be connected together (by writers of crime fiction, philosophers of history, psychologists, art critics and men of science)

is perfectly legitimate, and it is perfectly legitimate also to speculate regarding their epistemological status or their symbolical significance, scepticism regarding their sheer existence is a morbid and uncreative manifestation. For all the major problems that confront us both in art and life must be worked out on the assumption that our environment is made up of a mass of things that are substantially the same for all of us, and that it is in terms of them alone that we can truly fulfil our destiny as human beings.

We have next to consider the important principle that the Whole alone can be fully real. It follows that we can only understand the true nature of any particular manifestation in the universe if we know the character of that universe as a whole. The truth is comprehended in its entirety only by God, who is alone omniscient. To the degree that we fall short of divinely inclusive knowledge we shall have a limited conception of any element in the total scheme. As we have just seen, our experience of the element itself as a phenomenon can be relied upon; but we shall not properly *understand* it, since we are ignorant of the wider relationships into which it enters. The part is intelligible only as having its place in a whole, and that whole again has its place in another whole of a more comprehensive order, and so on until all is included in the Absolute.

Yet although this is a weighty conception that cannot easily be set aside, it would be dangerous to adopt the view advanced by certain philosophers that the particular and limited manifestation is by nature 'infected with relativity'. For there is an important distinction between impressions the significance of which is changed as a result of further disclosures, and those that retain their character apart from this fact. Thus it is plain that if I prefix to the word 'our' the letter 'y', its meaning is radically changed. But if I place a penny on a table next to a half-crown, the significance of the half-crown as such remains just what it was before. The fact that the two together add up to 2s. 7d. does not make them any less what they respectively are. In other words, we have to reckon with certain elements in our experience that possess for us a distinct and enduring character, independently of the increasingly wide combinations into which they may enter.

For instance, you may make all sorts of arrangements in laying out a garden, designing a dress, decorating a room, or organizing a

staff. But each of the units concerned—a cypress tree, a piece of lace, a mirror, a typewriter, Miss Simpson who operates it—will remain a self-complete unit within your scheme. In fact the intelligence and effectiveness of the system you are creating depend directly on the fact that it provides scope for each of them to be just what they are, essentially unaffected by the setting in which they find themselves.

Of course a unit when within a whole looks different from what it does when it is outside it. In a work of art, for instance, each element of which it is made up reflects the nature of the rest, so that in a painting a patch of colour will be modified by its contiguity with the others with which it is directly associated. But it remains true that the tints concerned exist in independence of the particular combinations created by the painter—just as notes and keys do for the musician, to whatever use he may put them.

Further, we must be cautious of assuming that as we pass from this limited world of the senses into transcendental realms of a higher character this fundamental principle will cease to apply. Although we can conceive of glorious manifestations in the sphere of cosmic orchestration, in which the harmonies entailed are of a celestial order, we shall still, one must assume, be concerned with ever more perfected relations between ever more perfected elements. Beyond this plane their lies only the mystery of Undifferentiated Being, into which we cannot as mortal beings hope to penetrate.

It can, of course, be argued that while we can conceive, and even believe in, the existence of a world of perfectly co-ordinated ideas, this Platonic Heaven is so remote from that of our actual experience that it has no great bearing upon it. The doctrine of the Many in the One is accepted only in a qualified measure on the grounds that the forms that we perceive in the physical realm are so distorted and limited that their harmonization can reveal the truth to us only in an incomplete and uncertain fashion. Critics of this tendency point out that all such figures as 'straight' lines, curves, rectangles and the like can only be expressed in physical matter in an imperfect form; if we seek for true precision we must turn to their prototypes Yonder. This is a world only of approximations, reflections and shadowy and uncertain representations.

Now although this is certainly in a sense true, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that there is a fundamental distinction between

what can be termed spiritual and scientific precision.<sup>1</sup> And here one cannot lay too much weight on the principle, affirmed in an earlier chapter, that the phenomena which appear to us on the plane of the macrocosmic convey to us, when spiritually regarded, meanings which are as deep as any that are accessible to us. It was on this foundation that Jesus taught in expounding his parables, that Michelangelo created his sculptures, and Shakespeare wrote his plays. In other words, our natural faculties, even though they have to be reinforced for the purposes of scientific investigation, are adequate for making those distinctions that are of real significance for the higher life of man. Nothing would be gained from this point of view if we were presented with mathematically exact distances, glass that is 'smooth' by the standards of the laboratory, sounds whose pitch is accurate for the purposes of scientific research. In any case we should not be able to detect the differences entailed! The introduction of such precision simply has the effect of conducting us into another sphere of experience, valid and interesting, but having no very close connection with our understanding of the deeper meaning of existence.

What we have to conclude, therefore, is that, whatever may await us in the Beyond, we are presented in this world with a principle—that of parts-in-unity—that we can safely accept as being illuminating and creative. We have a true knowledge of the individual units of which our world is made up—the primary numbers, configurations and sequences—and we have a true knowledge also of the way in which, up to a certain point, they can be combined in our experience. And this should be enough for us—at least as a beginning.

## *2. Horizontal and Vertical*

We are impelled, then, to accept the fact that wholes constitute an important element in our experience. What principles, we must now ask, are we to apply in evaluating their significance? Clearly in this field, as in any other, we must have available to us certain norms to which the data we are acquiring can be referred. Otherwise we have no command over the situation either on the scientific or on the philosophical plane.

The most elementary form of knowledge available to us is that represented by bare factual description. The observer simply records, as faithfully as possible, that a situation exhibits certain simple features, or that a series of events, has taken place in a particular order. Of course even on this plane general ideas have to be introduced, since they are implied in any form of description. But in this case they are of a rudimentary type, such that they can easily be grasped by the ordinary person who has had no technical training. The evidence produced in courts of law is for the most part of this straightforward kind.

On the next level description is given a much more precise character. The behaviour of physical objects and living beings is accounted for as resulting from the operation of certain known laws and principles. The state of mind of a patient in a clinic, the formation and passage of a cyclone, the movements of animals and populations, the history and character of a religious sect, the nature of a chemical reaction, are brought into relation with antecedent conditions, and thereby rendered more or less intelligible. That is to say the object considered is assigned to a certain class, and its behaviour explained in causal terms.

Here two points call for mention. An existing state of affairs is seen to be determined by others that have preceded it. Certain factors were combined and this chemical product, electrical discharge, period of unemployment, distribution of products is the inevitable outcome. This does not, if we are thinking precisely, necessarily commit us to accepting the concept of 'causation'; we may prefer to speak only of 'sequence' or 'routine'. But there can certainly be no doubt that the attention is concentrated upon a succession of events in time.

Then in the second place it will be apparent that so far as we are attempting to deal with experience on this plane we are invoking, both in respect of description and of explanation, laws and principles that have been arrived at only on an experimental basis, and which have as a result no absolute and compulsive character. Certain ways of connecting phenomena together are tried out by investigators, with varying results. Moreover, they have reference only to very limited aspects of the total manifestation under consideration, and have no necessary connection with one another. While finally they

are all liable to be superseded at any time with the advance of our knowledge. The nearest approach to reliability that we reach in this field is when we confine our attention to the more elementary physical characteristics of objects, as they are considered by scientists. In this case a high degree of accuracy is attainable—as is demonstrated by the amazing developments that have taken place in the field of modern technology. But when we come to theories that are evolved by psychologists, sociologists and historians we find ourselves, as I have remarked earlier, in a realm of considerable uncertainty, which increases rapidly the higher we ascend in the hierarchical scale.

Further, in respect of all such thinking our emotions have only a minor part to play in the acquisition of knowledge. It is a question primarily of establishing certain correlations that are seen to have a logical and consistent character, and nothing deeper is involved.

If, now, we consider the criteria that are offered to us in the 'vertical' dimension we must first note that so far as we are examining intellectually any formal system it exists for us entirely outside the realm of time. On those occasions on which we are absorbed in studying its purely formal features the past history of an object, its relation to others, or the forces that have gone to its making, are irrelevant to us. In such moods we have no interest in 'how it got like that'. Scientific and historical considerations are now irrelevant. The only factors that engage our attention are those of meaning and significance. In other words, we are concerned with that which can only be *contemplated*.

Let us suppose that a man is examining from this point of view a silver candlestick. He takes no account of its chemical composition, of its individual history, of its commercial value, of its place in this or that cultural scheme, of the craftsman who made it, of whether it is a unique piece or one of a set, of the period from which it dates. Such considerations may be of importance in other connections, but his concern at the moment is exclusively with its character as an embodied idea, as a self-contained system of relations that is invested with significance. He is occupied with its absolute rather than with its relative characteristics, and they remain the same for him whatever its provenance, and at whatever point in space and time it may be examined.

Moreover, it is a significant fact that the spectator himself has also momentarily transcended his relation to time. As long as he is fully absorbed in the spectacle before him he is equally oblivious of his own condition and history. He disregards completely his personal troubles, his past experiences, his geographical location, his family connections, his age and nationality, and the time of day or night. In other words, there is in this matter a close correspondence between the transcendence which is achieved in the objective and the subjective mode. The observer unites the higher part of himself contemplatively with what he is perceiving in the realm of the Eternal, and enjoys an upliftment of spirit as a result.

Needless to say, such transcendence can also be achieved by the collective effort of a number of people. Thus if a group of devout souls succeed at a meeting in achieving unity with one another through their common concentration upon ideas of an elevated type that are accepted by all, they are for a time established within a system of relations that is completely independent of any in which they may find themselves in terms of their ordinary mundane associations.

In other words, we have to take account of a type of situation in respect to which our scientists, sociologists and historians have absolutely no contribution to offer us. For a dimension of being is entailed to which their discoveries and speculations are irrelevant. All that is now of significance is the degree of unity that has been manifested within a whole.

It can further be seen that in giving ourselves up to contemplation on this plane we enter a region of being that possesses a very special character. For when we come to consider more elevated manifestations in this field we find that a liberation of the emotions is an essential condition for expressing them. Moreover, they awaken within us realizations of a type that cannot be conveyed to others except by an appeal to the intuitions and the use of poetic imagery. Rationalism is left behind, as it always must be on the threshold of any truly sacred region. For it is only by calling upon the higher powers of the mind that manifestations of this order can be understood and evaluated.

We are now in a position to consider the standards to be applied in grading this type of knowledge. It can easily be seen that since all

'horizontal' references are disregarded there is only one criterion that remains available to us: that of interior harmony and proportion. What now occupies our attention is the degree of balance and coherence that is observable between the elements that compose a whole.

But this evidently introduced into the equation the factor of the ideal. For whereas, as we have seen, the scientific investigator is concerned only to discover in what respect the elements in the world of actuality can be connected together in terms of empirical laws, so far as we raise our minds to the level of contemplation we find ourselves inescapably involved with an order of perfection that is intuitively apprehended, and to which our creations in the realm of art and life can ever more closely approximate.

It may be recalled that we have met with this situation already in considering the significance of the West—the individual's personal path through the world. We saw that in following it he is guided by an inward realization that he must seek to conform ever more faithfully to a condition of balance and integration which exists for him at the beginning only on the plane of the ideal. In other words the 'vertical' element in experience receives in this case a marked accentuation.

What is the ultimate point of reference of thought in this dimension? It is clearly an Absolute that may be defined as a condition of being in which perfection and inclusiveness are at their maximum. Each element is present in its purest form, and in such a way that it stands in a harmonious relation to every other.

Now I am not suggesting that this state of being can be directly *known*. But I do venture to affirm that we have at least an anticipatory intuition of its reality. It is not inconceivable by us. Moreover—and this is an important point—whether we realize the fact fully or not, we do actually make use of this norm in dealing with the spiritual aspects of our experience. Even when it is a question of the relatively commonplace experience of laying the table 'nicely', we seek to attain an effect whereby each unit involved strikes a pleasing note in a pleasing whole. And the skilful hostess seeks to create the same type of combination in a more subtle medium. And when it comes to the most highly cultivated evaluation of aesthetic and religious manifestations it is still the same basic principle that is applied.



Further, although this 'vertical' standard of evaluation is of great spiritual import, it is essentially simple and uniformly applicable. And it is this, one must suggest, that explains why its employment has such a tranquillizing effect on the mind. On the contrary, so far as we deal with our experience 'horizontally' we are obliged, as we have seen, to have recourse to standards that are in the last resort arbitrary in character and which as a result leave us with a basic sense of uncertainty.

Now as to the relation between the two aspects of experience that we have been discussing. Both, it is plain, are being given to us all the time in conjunction. Something is presented to our attention, and it appears inevitably as an object which has at one and the same time a physical and chemical composition, a history, a 'personal' relation to ourselves, and an absolute significance. Or to put it differently, it exists for us both in time and in eternity. It is at once an element in the universal flux of things and a medium for the disclosure of values which possess a transcendental character. This conjunction is obviously of deep significance, for it implies that the general and the particular are given to us always in organic unity, and that it is only by an act of abstraction that we separate them from one another.

But our responses to these two aspects of being are by no means adequately synthesized. In the first place, the relation between them is only rarely properly appreciated. The historian, for instance, is constantly engaged with them both, and appeals to each type of criterion that is involved, passing from one to the other without realizing (unless he happens to be also a philosopher) that two fundamentally different standards of evaluation are appealed to in his exposition. At one point he proceeds 'horizontally', supporting his conclusions by reference to established economic facts, the existence of charters, inscriptions and similar records. At another he is obliged, in order to evoke for us the human and spiritual aspect of the drama, to introduce the 'vertical' dimension into his account—such as the nobility or baseness of an individual, the appeal of a religious ideal, or the aesthetic character of some work of art, all of which, as we have seen, can be objects of contemplation only, having an absolute and not a relative significance.

Suppose, for example, that it is a question of conveying to the

reader the character of Napoleon. However extensive the researches of the investigator into his history and background, the social, military and economic factors with which he was called upon to deal, and the policies that he pursued at different points in his career, the fact remains that there emerges out of all these complexities the impression of a particular personality, the distinctive character of which lies precisely in the unique way in which all the energies in his richly endowed being were manifested in conjunction with one another. And so far as we are considering this synthetic effect we are evidently concerning ourselves with a system of relationships which exist on a different plane from that on which we are occupied with questions of fact or causal relationships.

It will be seen, therefore, that the student of Napoleon's life is fully justified in attaching serious importance to the testimony afforded by any portraits of him that are available. For he rightly assumes that for the discerning observer the actual sight of an individual, or failing that a representative picture of him, can reveal in a measure just that effect of factors in conjunction that no scientific account of their character can provide. In other words, we are again brought back to the fact that the character of a whole is such that it can only be contemplated. Of course the historian makes a point of furnishing us where possible with pictures relating to his theme. But the point which I want to emphasize is that in so doing he is appealing to 'vertical' rather than to 'horizontal' standards of reference.

As to the psychological aspect of our dual relation to the vertical and the horizontal, it will be clear that we are presented in this field with all sorts of difficult problems. But as I have already considered the theme sufficiently in discussing 'the poles of consciousness' in an earlier chapter I shall say nothing further regarding it at this point.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CHARACTER OF WHOLE

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#### 1. *Degrees of Integration*

WE ARE NOW in a position to consider the character of the different types of wholes that are presented to us in various connections. And we must begin by examining the nature of those elements in our experience that are non-organic in character, or at least organic only in a limited sense of the term.

It will be obvious in the first place that mere *connectedness* is devoid of any deep significance. In every direction we are confronted with objects that are associated with one another in a purely superficial sense through the mere fact of propinquity. Every moment of the day all over the world millions of them are coming into external contact with one another as a simple consequence of the fact that they can move, or be moved, from one point to another. And in most cases the relation involved is purely casual. Thus if a person drives in a car from one part of a city to another he will in the course of his journey pass a large number of objects and people with whom he has connections of a wholly insignificant type. And a similar situation is always entailed whenever any considerable movement in space is involved. To be active is to become engaged with the miscellaneous, the inorganic and the unco-ordinated. It is only the inmates of prisons, asylums, hospitals and private sick-rooms who enjoy the questionable privilege of reducing their fortuitous contacts to an absolute minimum!

Further, it can easily be seen that man's inner life in the realm of imagination is also largely irrelevant to the surroundings in which he finds himself. In the case of the person in the car, for instance, he will have different thoughts at different points in his journey, with no necessary direct connection between them and his changing outer environment.

Now let us pass from the discrete to the associated, and begin by considering linkages that have a general character only. First of all the manifold elements that make up our world are connected with one another *logically*. For it is impossible to think of any one of them without having to reckon with their relation to numbers of others. The concept of 'a tropical island', for instance, is bound up inseparably with other concepts such as 'mainland', 'ocean', 'temperate', 'coastline', 'isolation', and the like. To think of anything *at all* is to place it within a complex of cognate ideas. Moreover, this system itself is indis severable from further systems, and so on until we have finally to include every idea which can enter our minds.

This aspect of knowledge is from one point of view of serious importance. Students of philosophy will be aware that what is known as the Axiom of Internal Relations is of basic significance in the system of logical idealism developed by the Hegelian school. But it would be out of place to discuss it here.

Again, objects and living beings can be connected together in terms of factors that are too general to have any direct importance in relation to the creative purposes of life. Thus it is obvious that from this point of view there is little significance in the fact that all material bodies are equally subject to the influence of gravity and the laws of chemistry and physics. For this is simply to define certain of the basic and unmodified conditions in terms of which all living beings on the surface of the earth are called upon to work out their destiny. When we become concerned with geographical and racial factors the situation becomes less abstract, and if we go further and take account of social, political and cultural influences we draw somewhat nearer to the realm of vital realities. But the element of the organic does not disclose itself decisively until in this passage from the extensive to the intensive we come to consider material and social relationships of a really intimate character. Power is released and meaning revealed only at those vital points at which combinations of a very definite and limited type have been established. In terms of human association this means the existence of such units as a family, a school, a factory, a club, a laboratory, a working party, a church. And in terms of material activity it means the bringing into existence of every kind of creation in the fields of science and art.

The basic principle entailed is simple enough: wholes become significant to the degree that the interconnectedness between their parts is intensified and harmonized. The richer the character of the elements involved, and the more complete their unification, the greater the labour involved in creating them, and the greater also their spiritual significance. On the other hand it is a commonplace that general and relatively vague affiliations that do not compel those concerned to come to terms with the existential element in experience are of little moment, except as preparing the way for serious commitments and dedications at a later point.

## 2. *The Structure of Systems*

We must now consider more closely what is to be understood by a 'whole'. First of all, it is something more than a mere *aggregate*, like a heap of refuse, or a number of cars parked in the same place. For the mark of an aggregate is that it is a matter of indifference whether any one of the items of which it is made up is removed, or others are added. This miscellaneous quality derives from the fact that no formative factor has been at work in determining the character of the final effect. The varied objects collected in any Lost Property Office provide a perfect example of an aggregate, since the only principle of integration involved is the absent-mindedness manifested in different circumstances by a large number of fallible human beings!

Again, if we are speaking of a 'whole' in the proper sense of the term we mean something more than that certain objects have been so welded together as to form a compact and solid body. For instance, a lump of clay in which fragments of metal, wood, fabric and the like have become embedded in a haphazard manner may be described as a 'whole', but only in a loose sense. For the purposes of clarity a 'whole' of this type should be carefully distinguished from an *organic* whole, each part of which is essential for the total pattern that is formed.

It is with this type of whole alone that we shall here be engaged. And the first consideration that presents itself is that the wholes that we encounter in the course of our experience are of every conceivable type: simple, complex, minute, extensive, ephemeral, enduring,

material, immaterial, natural, artificial, animate, inanimate, ideal, actual, static, dynamic, stable, unstable, mechanical, aesthetic, and so on. In fact, as suggested above, our daily experience consists of practically nothing else but transactions with different kinds of wholes, presented to us against an indeterminate and shifting background.

To give a few random examples of wholes, we have the easily identified system constituted by such a physical object as a coffee-pot or an inkstand. Its limits are precisely defined, as is also the organization of its parts. And it is the same with a living animal, which is enclosed within the envelope formed by its skin and fur. A football match is also a clearly recognizable whole since it takes place within a rectangle marked on the grass by lines across which neither players nor spectators are permitted to stray. A cloud is a whole until its particles reach a certain degree of diffusion. A crowd in the street is a whole until it begins to dissolve. A spy network is a whole. My inner functioning is a whole to the extent that I have achieved psychological integration.

The Romantic Movement is a whole so far as certain tendencies in literature, philosophy and religion can be seen by the discerning observer to be determined by a common inspiration and involved in a process of mutual fructification and conditioning. Every philosophical system is a whole so far as it represents an attempt at unifying a certain range of concepts. An audience is a whole to the degree that its members are responding together to the spectacle (itself a whole) that they are witnessing. The policy of a statesman is a whole so far as his decisions are determined by a regulative idea. Lovers become a whole at those high moments in which they are able to lose themselves in one another. And God and man become a whole so far as the mystics and illuminates amongst us make progress along the 'unitive way'.

It will further be evident that a 'whole' or a 'system' is indistinguishable from an incarnated 'idea'. For in each case we have to do with an immaterial unifying principle that can be contemplated by the mind, and considered if one so wishes in independence of the material in which it is embodied.

Again, all the wholes referred to above exhibit certain distinctive features. First of all, the principle by which they are organized is

internal and not external in character. A whole is a system of parts in unity, such that its character is independent of the relations into which it enters as a totality. Thus the mechanical system constituting an automobile engine remains the same, along whatever road the car may be travelling. And the same independence of its surroundings is manifested by a liner on the ocean, an aeroplane in the air, a watch on a person's wrist, a picture in a gallery, or a man walking along a street. It is the system and not the individual elements of which it is formed that comes into relation with other bodies.

Of course, an object may be affected or invaded by alien substances, while it may also extend in disorder beyond its proper boundaries. Again, a living organism or a mechanical device can be engaged in a dynamic process of drawing in forces and substances from its environment, and projecting others into it, without its formal structure being thereby affected. So also with organizations created by man, such as a factory, a film corporation, or a publishing house. While further, such mechanisms may be designed for either beneficent, neutral or malign purposes. But in all cases the principle applies that a form is established, whether as a system within a single object, or as regulating the relations between a number of objects, and that ideally the elements involved should remain clear and distinct from one another. But provision must also be made for the fact that the character and function of a system may change, as when a house is rebuilt, or a machine adapted to a new purpose.

The conclusion that we have to draw from all this is that so far as we are truly giving ourselves up to the study of the formal aspects of a whole, any comparisons we may make between it and other wholes (or between its individual elements and elements in other wholes) are instituted on a different level of thought. We then become concerned with cultural and historical considerations, in other words with relationships that are established on the 'horizontal' plane. But the formal, properly conceived of, is a factor which, as we saw earlier, involves us only with 'vertical' relationships—in other words, with relationships that are considered by reference to an absolute standard of perfection.

The next point to note is that the nature of a whole is not predictable from an analysis of its parts when studied in isolation. Thus, no

'examination of the chemicals contained in a human body could give us any notion of the character of the living organism in which they have their place. Nor can we infer from the observation of a collection of bolts, screws, wheels, metal plates and the like the particular way in which they will be combined by an inventor in designing a machine, or from the quality of the colours on an artist's palette the nature of the picture that he will create by blending them. The most that we can do in such cases is to conclude that the whole that will later emerge will be of a certain general type.

This element of unpredictability is of considerable significance, since it implies that the formative principle involved is mental and immaterial in character, and that creation is only possible when the material is subordinated to the intellectual. Hence the significance of the principle applied to painting: 'Before colour comes design'.

It can be seen also that every element of which a whole is composed is an essential factor in its structure, while conversely if any alien element is introduced its total character will be either impaired or destroyed. At the same time the style and function of every part are determined by the general nature of the system within which they have their place. A subtle principle of reciprocity comes into play whereby the whole both emerges as a product of the balanced individualities of its elements, and yet works back upon them by imposing upon them a unity which they could not of themselves provide. So is it with a battalion on parade, a well laid out garden, or an artistically conceived ballet: the charm for the spectator lies in the fact that the claims of the one and the many are presented to him in terms of a process of mutual determination which is at once subtle, satisfying and beyond analysis.

Again, the character of a whole is only clearly displayed when each of the elements of which it is composed retains, within the system, a distinct individuality of its own. The greater the degree of particularization entailed, the more rich and significant the total effect produced. For example, a number of identical marbles in a bag constitute a whole of a relatively simple and characterless type—an assembly of spherical objects. The collection would acquire an organic character only if they were of different sizes and colours, and arranged so as to form some kind of pattern. Of this more in the final section of this chapter.



Further, all the elements that together constitute a unity need to have certain basic characteristics in common for the synthesis to be achieved at all. Thus the figures in a classical picture must each have individually a classical character, the units that make up a tune all consist of notes, the parts of a machine all be mechanical, and the features of a Baroque building all be Baroque.

In the case of more complex wholes, however, this situation becomes modified. For instance, the plan for a pageant involves the co-ordination of elements of the most diverse type, ranging from flowers and tea-cups to Roman soldiers and Lady Godiva's charger. They are unified through the fact that they have their place somewhere in one comprehensive system that provides for them all. And this brings to light another fundamental principle regulating the formation of wholes: their nature is such that to an extensive degree lesser wholes can be accommodated harmoniously within greater.

Thus in the pageant each element, although part of the general scheme, is related immediately to the other parts of a lesser system. And this principle runs through all our experience. A picture judiciously placed within a decorative scheme is a whole within a whole. So also is a stone set in a ring, a park within a city, a page within a book, a worker as a unit in a staff, a village within a county. And here again we are concerned with deeper issues than may at first appear, for the principle of wholes-within-wholes has very important applications in all sorts of directions. Thus it provides a means for reconciling the individual with the group, and of developing systems of decentralization in many fields. Further, as we shall see later, it leads the mind naturally upwards to the conception of an altogether inclusive Whole, or Absolute, that embraces all lesser wholes within itself.

And here one may observe in passing that there is one type of formal arrangement which is of considerable spiritual significance: representation in miniature. In this case we meet with the deeply interesting fact that ideas of a universal import can be embodied in objects of very small physical dimensions—such as a jewel, a seal or a crucifix—with the result that the mind is called upon to take account of conceptions of the most fundamental type while concentrating upon some small-scale, concrete and perishable manifestation. And this means that to an extreme degree the permanent and

the impermanent aspects of reality are expressed in conjunction. Through this meeting of extremes a deep order of reconciliation is achieved, and the consciousness of the sensitive observer elevated to a lofty plane.

Finally, the structure of existence is so complicated that a human being is capable, not only of cognizing an almost limitless range of wholes in ever-changing corrections, but also of participating in numbers of them at one and the same time. Thus he can be active as the father of a family and a member of several societies, belong to a church, organize his business, paint pictures, join in madrigals, take part in games of various types and so on. This also is an important aspect of the organic, since there is manifested what may be described as the principle of *harmonious co-existence*. In other words, provided that the situation is raised to a certain plane, extremely diverse aspects of existence prove to be fully compatible with one another. Just as no artistic creation threatens or debases the character of any other, so in the realm of human affairs it is possible, if one's ideals are sufficiently high, to develop activities of the most varied type that not only do not conflict with, but actually supplement and set off, one another. And here again important metaphysical vistas open before us, since in reflecting on this situation we are led to perceive that the whole range of phenomena that the universe presents to us can be thought of as a vast manifestation of eternal ideas existing within the Divine Mind which in their transcendental aspect form a total harmony.

### 3. *Levels of Organization*

Something must now be said regarding the different planes, or levels, on which organic systems can be established. Certain factors of a fundamental type here come into play: the dependence of the part upon the whole in which it has a place; the degree to which it is individualized; and the complexity of the total system involved. This may be brought out by considering in turn three basic levels of organization: the mechanical, the biological and the human.

Every piece of machinery constitutes a miniature system, consisting of elements that have been placed in association for some special purpose. But however complex its structure, it ranks rela-

tively low in the organic hierarchy, and this for several reasons. In the first place it is capable only of performing one operation, or a small number of operations, of a restricted type. It is in fact purposely designed to do the same thing over and over again with monotonous regularity until it is finally worn out—whether it is a vacuum cleaner, a sewing machine, a pump, a crane or an aero engine. Hence the peculiar psychological effect that mechanical motion has upon our minds: there is movement, and a greater or lesser degree of noise, producing an impression of energy and creativeness; and yet this effect of animation is neutralized through the fact that the same operations are repeated endlessly. It is as if a man were walking energetically along a road and yet all the time remaining in the same place.

Again, since the contrivance is mechanical most of the units that it contains will be standardized, in the sense that corresponding units are used in the construction of numbers of other machines. This applies particularly of course to such basic elements as screws, bolts and the like. Moreover, even when a part performs a function of a specialized type—like a carburetter in a petrol engine—it is in almost all cases designed, not for a particular machine, but so that it can be incorporated in any example of a particular model. In other words, although its function is more highly differentiated than that of a lever or a roller, it is nonetheless a formalized unit, exchangeable with equivalent units in other machines of the same design.

Another point to be observed is that the differentiation observable between the parts of a machine is not very highly marked—for the reason that only a limited range of substances and functions is available to the designer. It is really a question of giving expression in terms of glass, metal, electrical energy and the like to a relatively small number of mathematical formulae. And finally no element in a machine will degenerate or perish when removed from it and properly stored. Each part has an individual existence of its own, in whatever mechanism it may be included, and whether it is so included or not.

As to chemical and physical systems as they occur in Nature, or are devised by man, it will be obvious that they exist only within very narrow limits, for it is a question always of constant structure and behaviour, in accordance with so-called scientific 'laws'. More-

over, the factor of individuality is at an absolute minimum, since by definition *any* sample of a particular chemical element, provided that it is pure, will serve for the purpose of bringing about a desired reaction.

When we turn to the realm of biology we naturally find that the picture has changed considerably. In the first place the range and flexibility of the processes involved far exceeds any with which we meet in the realm of mechanical contrivances, while the individuality and number of the units comprising the whole is also much greater. One has only to consider the fact that a human body is on its own plane a miniature universe! Further, the functioning, and even the form, of each organ depends in a large measure upon the interflow of vitality between it and the others within the same organism—as is indicated by the fact that our brain processes and our muscular energies are affected by our digestion, and the activity of our glands by the messages we receive through the senses. And of course when an organ is removed from a living body its vital processes will be impaired or altogether arrested, while the organ itself, if not artificially preserved, will rapidly degenerate.

The purpose of all biological systems is, however, almost entirely restricted to that of securing the animal's survival. The creature is built upon a very definite pattern, and the energies of its organism are directed to ensuring that that pattern is maintained. This may involve it, of course, in association with other members of a group, in which case it participates in a symbiotic pattern of a wider order. But, apart from certain activities that seem to have a playful and exuberant nature, at no point do other than vital purposes come into the story.

When man appears, however, the situation acquires a radically different character. For although human beings are also as individuals biological organisms and thus on the same level as baboons, horses, tortoises or dogs, they are able, by virtue of their higher mental endowment, not only to control their physical processes in a way that animals cannot, but also to organize their collective biological existence with immeasurably greater flexibility and effectiveness. Their decisions in this field are determined, in part by innate and irresistible drives, but also by their freedom to select out of the vast resources of Nature whatever elements they need for their purposes.

They eat, sleep, move about and protect themselves more or less as they wish. Moreover, the groups and societies that are involved in this process are formed in many cases by spontaneous association in accordance with the changing demands of the emergent situation, and not simply through the effects of heredity and natural selection.

Then on a still more advanced level men can evolve patterns that have more than a survival value, since they are created through what may be described as the free activity of the intelligence. Such are the productions that we meet with in the higher cultural fields in music, painting, mathematics, science and philosophy, and which belong to the realm of values, instead of to that of practical ends and biological purposes. What is then entailed is that wholes are conceived of by different minds which are of such an order that they express the character of the Many in the One. That is to say, they are so constituted that each element involved not only has an intimate relation to the total scheme, but also a distinct individuality of its own.

Needless to say, the highest type of system known to us is that constituted by a developed human personality. For in the first place the range of elements that he is called upon to synthesize is extremely extensive. And in the second place to whatever degree his habits, sympathies and convictions may be modified by the passage of time, as far as he can he consciously controls his responses to influences from without in accordance with his individual needs and the conception that he entertains of his own nature. And he exercises the same control also in giving outward expression to his inner states. As a result he produces on others the effect of a clear-cut, disciplined and responsible being, who is the master of a complete miniature world, and who strikes this note consistently throughout all the phases of his growth.

As far as our experience of the phenomenal world goes (we will leave aside in this discussion the mystic's interior knowledge of God), the highest manifestation of permanency that is disclosed to us is that provided by the human spirit. Not the works of man, which are necessarily transient in character, nor his outward personality, which is in a large measure the outcome of the effect upon him of natural forces and social and historical influences, but the deepest principle in his nature, which is eternal in character.

I will not develop any elaborate arguments here to support this

view, but the essence of the matter is this. Although on one level the self can be regarded as nothing more than a succession of changing states, as Hume affirmed, it is important to recognize that the thinker who paints for us this picture of its condition can only do so by placing himself in a state of transcendence from which he makes this observation. In other words, the confusion entailed in all such attempts to represent the soul as a merely ephemeral manifestation results from an unacknowledged suppression of the fact that the self exists not only as object (that of which such changing states are predicated) but also as subject (that which as spectator observes that they exist).

The self as subject is in one aspect the rational principle in man, that which enables him not only to know, but to be aware that he knows. And to whatever degree the existence of this transcendental element in our being is obscured by psychological limitations, we most of us, if we have not succumbed to the influence of materialism, acknowledge its existence, both within ourselves and within our fellow men.

The fundamental character of the self lies in the fact that it is a transcendental centre of consciousness, manifesting in the twin modes of love and wisdom. Thereby it is enabled, firstly to place itself in relation with the external universe, and secondly to gain a widening knowledge of its character. Further, the life and power of all selves derive from the fact that they represent sparks, or emanations, of that Self in which they all have their being. And in respect of each of them the nature of the One finds expression in a unique fashion. And here we must distinguish between that separation of men and women that has its source in egotism, and their *spiritual* differentiation as individual centres of divine consciousness—an aspect of the matter which is usually ignored in most expositions of Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

Whether or not one accepts this theory of monadism, it remains true that the spiritually-minded person has awakened to the realization that a transcendental principle is active in the depths of the human soul. And this means that he recognizes that in its essence it has a permanent character, whatever the changes that take place in the outer personality in the succeeding phases of its development. For within the sphere of the soul's life, in spite of all its obscurities,

illusions and inconsistencies, there is reflected, at first intermittently and then with increasing steadiness, the light of the true Self, which is by nature immortal.

The significance of this relationship from the point of view of organic philosophy will be evident enough. In the first place the individual himself will realize as his consciousness unfolds that he can gain his spiritual freedom only by uniting his soul with the higher element within his being. And in the second place other people, to the degree that they are enlightened, will acknowledge the existence of this transcendental element in his personality and seek to afford it means of expression. And in so doing they will be vindicating the significance of the permanent element in man's constitution.

In the light of this situation the distinction between earthly and heavenly love becomes fully apparent. For whereas the mark of purely physical attraction is that the soul is responding primarily to those impermanent elements with which the interior, divine nature of the other comes into association through incarnation, when the relationship is raised to the spiritual plane sympathy is drawn forth first of all by the permanent principle in the being of the other. This, so far from diminishing, actually enhances responsiveness to the outward characteristics of the loved one. Yet at the same time the emotions are refined and sublimated through the fact that the lesser is loved only for the sake of the greater, the impermanent cherished on account of its being a manifestation of that which the lover recognizes to be immortal.

It appears, therefore, that the enlightened man is in essence a spiritual being, expressing his interior nature through the medium of impermanent and therefore largely deceptive manifestations. And to the degree that true communion between men and women is achieved they enter into a state of consciousness in which the enduring and the transitory are experienced as one, yet in such a way that the second is duly subordinated to the first.

#### *4. The Nature of Community*

But individuals are called upon to live in community with one another. And this means that we have to take account of wholes

that are created by the achieving of what may be described as dynamic unity. We then become concerned with situations in which people act (but for non-biological purposes) in harmonious conjunction. A procession, a religious ritual or an orchestral performance are obvious examples of this co-operation. But in such cases men and women are expressing themselves only within the limits of a strictly formal pattern. Greater freedom is allowed them if they are actors in a play, and still more if they are combining, as occurs on rare occasions, in developing a theme in terms of creative improvisation.

It will be evident that in respect of these last modes of association a high measure of organic unity is achieved. For each participant is an integral part of the system that has been established; no alien personalities are included; the behaviour and psychological condition of each of them is determined to a marked degree by the nature of the whole of which he is a part; he is giving free expression to his distinctive individuality; the system that has been brought into existence is unique, as also are all the personalities who have combined to create it; each human unit concerned is itself a lesser system, while within each of them there are included systems of a still more subordinate type in the domain of physique, dress, jewelry and the like. In a word, individualization and synthesis are both at their maximum.

Now it is not difficult to see that we are involved in this matter with an extension of the concept of personality. The essence of the matter is that a number of people, acting as a whole with a unified aim, and in the process retaining their distinctive individualities, constitute a *person* of a more comprehensive order than each one of them is in and for himself. For the combination thus created is based on the same fundamental pattern as is an individual person. In both cases it is a question of synthesizing various mental and emotional impulses for the purpose of perception, organization and creative expression. Only in this case the ideas and sympathies involved are shared by the members of a group, and not integrated only within the personality of an individual.

Further, it is also plain that any community of spirits that has achieved unity can itself be a unit in a complex of a more inclusive order. And this principle can be extended until at the Apex of the



system we find ourselves contemplating a Universal Person, within whose consciousness all lesser persons are embraced. The Divine, therefore, ceases to be conceived of as an abstraction, but appears instead as the ultimate Source of all the personal manifestations that are to be encountered on the different planes of cosmic being.

It would, however, be inappropriate to pursue this theme further here, so I will now consider the problem of community from a somewhat different angle.

Within every human being there is a deep principle at work impelling him to create out of his experience an organized 'world'. The significant fact about this 'world' is that it is built out of intimate personal memories. In the course of his life certain experiences have made a powerful impression upon him, and he has pondered over them deeply, so that they have become elements in his inward being. He is concerned in this matter with knowledge that has been 'proved upon the pulses', that has been acquired as much by emotional response as by intellectual effort. The material of which he is thus making use is, in fact, that which he has accumulated, step by step, in following his life pattern along what I have earlier described as the 'weft' dimension of existence. And it will be clear that the principle involved in the organization of his 'world' is radically different from that employed by the scientific investigator who makes use exclusively of data which are 'the same for all observers'.

Nevertheless, just because we are concerned with a 'world' and not with a mere review or summation of past experiences the factor of order comes decisively into the scheme. But it is an order of a somewhat subtle type. For something more is entailed than clear and logical arrangement. The problem facing the individual is that of understanding, as far as he is able, the general principles involved in his essentially personal, and therefore largely incommunicable, experience. The undertaking is naturally difficult, since each element in the whole must be deeply felt, while at the same time every effort must be made to organize the material that is available as a result—again a synthesis of the emotional and the intellectual aspects of our experience.

Moreover, this synthesis is also achieved objectively, since the person's 'world' will consist not only of organized ideas, but also of material objects which he is impelled to arrange in particular

patterns in respect of such matters as establishing his home, ordering his business affairs, developing his cultural interests and the like. And if he is not by temperament a thinker this aspect of integration will be that in which his nature most decisively expresses itself.

But he also finds himself in daily association with other men and women. How does his relationship with them work out in terms of the system we are here considering? First of all, although each person lives at the centre of a system of ideas that he has created by a process of more or less systematic selection, so far as that system is spiritual it is harmonious with every other that is also spiritual. For it is based upon an acknowledgment of elements in our common experience that have a perennial value. In other words, to the degree that a man has succeeded in emancipating himself from the localizing and constricting influence of impermanent material conditions he becomes concerned with 'values' which are of universal significance. This does not of course mean that he simply entertains the same ideas as a number of other people. What it implies, rather, is that his personal approach to truth proves to be quite compatible with that of other spiritually-minded individuals. It is indeed inevitable that each in this sphere should develop and express his own individual conception of reality, for we are involved in this matter with the basic principle of the Many in the One which, as we have seen earlier, provides for the possession of individuality by each particular part of which the whole is composed. In other words, totality is the very opposite of totalitarianism.

This compatibility between individual 'worlds' of which I am speaking is not merely of the order of a fanciful ideal, but a matter of actual observation. The essence of the situation is that each in his own way personalizes the already personalized 'worlds' of others. Thus an artist brings to the making of a picture a fund of experience which is his alone, so that it bears, as we say, the stamp of his personality. But the man who is contemplating it is also giving expression to his own past experience. In other words, he will see and interpret the production in the light of his own individual history, so that as a result he is more sensitive to certain of its features than to others, while again he will have established in his mind certain principles which he will apply to the work, as he does to any other.

Further, other observers, to whose number there is no theoretical

limit, will be in the same position with respect to it as they are also with respect to a host of other works of art. But it will be evident that, provided none of them fall from the level of true aesthetic evaluation and descend to the plane of prejudice and disputation, their diverse individual standpoints will not in any way limit either one another or those that find expression in the works they are considering. On the contrary, a spiritual enrichment will be entailed, since through the contacts involved new and creative combinations of ideas are brought into existence. One may say that a process of cross-fertilization is accomplished in the cultural realm. The image is not merely approximate, for the essence of fertilization is that each of the agents concerned retains its individuality in the process.

We have also to consider the part played by matter in this process of communication. I have repeatedly in these pages referred to the fact that physical objects exercise a peculiar influence upon our minds, causing us to be strongly impressed by their immediacy, their sheer *being*. And to the degree that people are called upon to deal with them on this elementary level they very easily tend to assign to them an unduly important place in the general scheme of things of which they are a part. This comes out particularly in respect of their relation to human beings. It is a commonplace that to an increasing degree man today is exposed to the danger of being subordinated to the machinery which should properly be his servant. Technology prevails over humanism, and the level of our civilization continues to decline as a result.

The corrective is obviously an attitude of mind that accords to material objects their rightful, and inferior, position in the hierarchical scheme. The adjustment called for, although far-reaching in its consequences, is really of a quite simple order. Practically all material objects, and certainly *all* machines, come into our lives in conjunction with our association with other human beings, whether such people are immediately present, or indirectly connected with them.

Everything depends upon the plane on which the problem is dealt with. The basic situation is that men and women, who are inwardly related to the permanent element in reality, conduct transactions with one another through the medium of material aggregates which they find, or create, outside themselves, and which are of an impermanent character. Now it is an interesting fact that so far as

they permit themselves to descend to the level on which such aggregates are in the foreground of their vision they exercise a disruptive, and what at times appears to be an almost malign, influence upon the human relations that they should properly facilitate. They manifest, in fact, a quite extraordinary quality of 'cussedness'—with the familiar result that the most bitter and senseless quarrels between people are so often provoked by material incidents and situations which are in themselves of a quite trivial nature.

On the other hand, it is also a matter of experience that when people are in a harmonious relation to one another the material objects with which they are jointly concerned not only acquire what may be termed an incidental character, but tend to behave in a surprisingly docile fashion, while the task of dealing with them becomes immeasurably lighter. It is, in fact, as if love sublimates the material and robs it of its native oppressive and resistant character. In this situation we have yet another example of the liberating effect of thinking in organic instead of separatistic terms. The esotericist would affirm that what is here involved is the influence of the human mind upon the elemental spirits who are active behind the scenes in maintaining the energies of Nature; but of course one does not expect the enlightened person of today to take such ideas seriously!

Now a further aspect. We are so constituted that we have a strong impulse to place ourselves in communication with one another. The opposite condition is one of solipsistic neuroticism. As we have seen above, the mark of such communication is that although each person is moved to enter the 'worlds' of others, he can only experience them in terms of the character of that 'world' which he has built for himself, and in which he is obliged as a result to live. But it will be plain that the only way in which the dwellers in these individualized spheres of experience can come into touch with one another is by making use of concepts that have an agreed meaning for all concerned. In other words, they must have a shared 'language'. Discussion between them is only possible if they have in the first place come into contact with similar elements in the external world, and in the second place both adopted a certain convention for discussing them. To give a simple example, if two people have both visited Hungary, both speak French, and have in addition the same cultural

background, they will be able, in respect of this particular theme, to get into touch with one another with particular ease—other things being equal.

But in this field also there is a danger that the attention will be unduly concentrated upon the medium of communication rather than upon the process of communication itself. Here, however, it is notions rather than material objects as such that play the principal role. The intellectual yields all too easily to the temptation to detach the ideas presented to him by a speaker from the speaker himself. Their content becomes more important for him than their source in another human spirit. The utterances of others acquire for the listener an anonymous character, with the result that all vital contact is lost, and true mutual understanding becomes impossible to achieve.

This is, of course, the psychological aspect of the matter. When we consider it from the philosophical standpoint we find that we are provided with still another indication of the deep interconnectedness that prevails between the different aspects of our experience. For it is plain that the unity between souls that the spiritually-minded are always seeking to achieve is only realizable if those involved are equally sensitive to the claims upon them of that grand scheme of things into which every human being is born. In other words, maturity means responsiveness both to the personal and to the cosmic aspects of experience. All communications are in terms of some sort of code; and if we take the broadest possible view of the matter we find that the most universal code of all is constituted by the external realm so far as it exists for us as cosmos rather than as chaos. No philosophy of 'I and Thou' can by itself meet our needs. For the two can only communicate to the degree that they can share common experience. And this means ultimately that only when our knowledge of cosmology is perfected can the fullest measure of mystical communion between selves be achieved.

Hence sympathy is perfected by knowledge. Again the principle of integration comes into play. But it can be seen to be at work also within the sphere of knowledge itself. For effective communication depends first upon a proper experience of objects as matter of factual experience, with their appropriate emotional appeal, and then upon the recognition of the formal elements they present,

which is of course an intellectual activity. So we have to conclude that a process of synthesis is necessary in order to gain command of the medium that is essential for the synthesis of our own personal 'world' with that of others. Once again an inescapable interdependence of parts and functions, reflecting the fulness of the Absolute in which all is included.

### 5. *The Intelligible and the Sublime*

We have now considered in some detail the successive planes on which the principle of the organic is manifested. I must now say something regarding the effect made upon the observer by the different types of wholes that we have been examining. In other words, I now propose to consider levels of organization, not from the point of view of the increasing degree of complexity which they exhibit, but from that of their aesthetic, or spiritual appeal.

The view I want to advance is that although the principle of order is found to be manifested at each level, the relation existing between the parts and the whole becomes increasingly intimate as we ascend, and that finally we reach a point at which the combinations which are presented to the observer as a result elude the grasp of the intellect, and can only be *contemplated*.

Let us begin by noting that in the case of more simple patterns it is only *parts* of objects that contribute to the formation of the whole. To put it differently, a unity is created between elements that are abstracted for the purpose from objects that possess various other characteristics which are irrelevant to the particular combination that is being formed. Such objects do not in their totality enter into the pattern under consideration. For example, I can pay for my lunch by handing the cashier, say, a half-crown, a shilling, and a threepenny bit. But the significance of these coins in respect of this particular transaction is limited to the fact that they add up to the sum of 3s. 9d. Their respective sizes, designs and colours have no relevance to the business in hand. Again, I can erect a building—a shed, for instance—that is strictly functional in character, by which is meant that no attempt is made to bring out the character of the various substances that are made use of in constructing it, and no ornamentation is introduced into the scheme. So is it also with such

matters as the binding of a book, the character of clothing, the style of a boat—a wide range of variation is possible in respect of the treatment of material that is used primarily for achieving utilitarian ends.

It would be tedious to review the successive stages by which the individual component in its completeness is accorded increased significance within the whole. Let us instead consider the other end of the series. What we find is that units enter the totality in their integrity. Such is the situation with a family that is truly united: its spiritual significance lies in the fact that a group of complex and freely manifesting personalities are related to one another through being elements in a harmonious system that contains each one without limiting his distinctive character. Another example is afforded by a ballet: each dancer displays his or her distinctive characteristics to the utmost, thereby contributing to a scheme which embraces and co-ordinates the activities of all concerned. Finally, it should be noted that the principle involved in these examples can theoretically be applied on the most extended scale, so that we find ourselves contemplating finally that state of ecstatic universal harmony which the mystics amongst us mean by 'heaven'.

As this process of enrichment continues another factor comes increasingly into evidence. Although at each stage we are concerned with intelligible order—if it is only a case of consulting the Post Office Guide—a point is in course of time reached at which the actual *conjunction* of the elements involved begins to produce a definite effect on the mind and overpower for us the merely logical connectedness entailed. To this aspect of experience I have already called attention earlier. The essence of the matter is that we have to take account of relationships which, although their foundation is intellectual, exist on a different plane, and are at the same time essentially spiritual in character.

That the intelligible and the aesthetic can be clearly differentiated should be evident enough. For instance, it is clear that the purely mental operations entailed in reading the score of an undistinguished and an inspired piece of music are exactly the same. Equally effective results can be achieved in the field of mathematical calculations, whether the methods employed are laborious or elegant in character (a classic case being the different treatments of the calculus by Newton

and Leibnitz). Letters can be printed in such an order that they convey a clear and intelligible message to the reader; yet the effect of the type and its disposition can be aesthetically either attractive or repulsive. Correct French can be spoken with a pleasing or a wretched accent. A piece of scientific apparatus may be technically effective irrespective of whether its design charms the eye. A room may contain a number of beautiful objects arranged in either a tasteful or an insensitive fashion. And so on.

Further, this element of harmonious proportion does not emerge only when intellectual order has been carried to a certain degree of complexity, for it can be a characteristic of the most elementary arrangement conceivable. For example, as is well known, if we are invited to divide a straight line into two sections in such a way that they appear in an agreeable relationship to one another, we almost all of us hit in time upon one which satisfies our aesthetic sense. In other words, beauty is not a luxury product, but is woven into the very texture of life.

Naturally the aesthetic is not an end in itself, for it is clearly a sign of decadence to isolate the beautiful from the setting in which it appears except for special purposes, such as that referred to earlier in the case of the person contemplating the formal features of a candlestick. The ideal is the most complete possible synthesis between the material, the functional and the aesthetic aspects of the object. If this principle is not respected the organic character of the manifestation is seriously weakened. Or to put it differently, due respect must be paid to the hierarchical principle, which provides for the fact that each successive level of the pyramidal structure rests squarely and firmly upon that which lies below it—a theme which will be discussed in the next chapter.

It must be realized, however, that in contemplating what may be described as the purely spiritual aspect of objects we enter into a realm of consciousness which is of the deepest significance for the unfolding of our inner nature. For we are thereby rendering ourselves receptive to impulses that reach us from lofty planes of being. We are now concerned, not with scientific, historical or philosophical relationships, but with the disclosure of pure being in terms of unanalysable, but deeply revealing, meaning and significance. Although analysis fails us (except in so far as it is restricted to an



examination of the formal patterns entailed), we enjoy the experience of being in the presence of something which works powerfully upon our souls and releases us from our normal and habitual bondage to the material and the intellectual aspects of existence. And if we are creative we exert our powers also in attempting to communicate to others, however feebly, the nature of that which has been disclosed to us.

Finally, it must not be forgotten that when the mind is active on this plane the emotional nature is always stirred as a result. And this means that the observer is enjoying the first phases of an exalted state of consciousness in which his thinking and feeling are really integrated and his experience may truly be said to have acquired an organic character.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PRINCIPLE OF HIERARCHY

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IN THE COURSE of the last chapter we saw that it lies in the nature of wholes that they have their place in others of a more inclusive type. It will readily be seen that this scheme of lesser within greater systems can be easily and appropriately expressed in terms of hierarchical structure, and this aspect of knowledge must now be examined.

My treatment of the theme in the present chapter will, however, be relatively brief. The subject is of such basic importance that it can only be dealt with adequately in an essay devoted specially to the question. What follows is of the nature of an outline, provided to give the reader some preliminary idea of the problems that present themselves in this field.

#### *1. The Hierarchical Structure*

Let me observe at the outset that there is no question here of attempting to vindicate the principle of Hierarchy as it finds expression in a social or ecclesiastical system in which absolute authority is vested in those by which it is controlled at the top and delegated by them to a series of subordinates who are engaged in executing their purposes. What we are considering, rather, is the fact that the universe can be seen to exist on a series of graded levels, the reality of which we find ourselves bound to acknowledge if we analyse our experiences with any care.

We have to reckon, in fact, with a system which seems not to be of our making, and which culminates in an Absolute which includes lesser structures within itself. This Absolute will possess certain distinctive features. It will be the ultimate Source of all freedom and creative power. It will be such that it unites within itself both the permanent and the impermanent aspects of existence. It will be an ultimate point of synthesis at which wisdom and love will be perfectly conjoined.

We saw in an earlier chapter that although the nature of the Absolute can be experienced only mystically, it is at least given to us to understand, in the course of our ordinary existence, how certain relations and situations point towards it as a state of being in which separatism is finally overcome and completeness achieved. Now since at one end of the scale we have a condition of unrestricted freedom and at the other a condition in which determination and separation are manifested to a maximum degree, it will be evident that provision will have to be made for a series of planes, each of which determines that which lies below it, while at the same time it is itself determined by that by which it is transcended.

Here one must remark that in considering this particular structure it is of no consequence whether we think of such planes in subjective or in objective terms. For, if we begin by leaving out of account the realm of purely 'private' hallucinations and imaginings (duly recognizing, of course, that some very subtle problems can be presented to us in this field), we find ourselves engaged with a realm of experience that is, broadly speaking, of the same order for all concerned. Now we have seen earlier that 'experience'<sup>1</sup> is an ambiguous term, since it has both a subjective and an objective reference. But at the same time the fact that we are continually driven to have recourse to it brings out the principle that for all ordinary purposes at least it is a matter of indifference whether we speak of objects which produce images in our minds, or of the images themselves. Thus, if we are considering, say, those features of Windsor Castle that exist for any reasonably intelligent observer we can either say that certain relations may be perceived as existing between elements in the building, or between the images of them that are formed in our minds; it is clearly the same thing. And so far as we are arranging our experiences in a hierarchical order it is the same thing also whether we speak of levels of being or of levels of consciousness. In a word, gradations in the realm of existence are from this point of view identical with gradations in the realm of thought.

There are several ways in which such a system can be symbolized: as a series of circles, the lesser of which are included within the greater; as a pyramid the base of which is constituted by the maximum degree of finiteness and materiality, while its apex represents

infinity; or as an upright cone, which in significance is practically equivalent to the pyramidal figure. The essential point is that in all these cases we have to do with a passage, through a series of states or conditions, from confinement in separation and illusion towards complete and final emancipation.

In considering the significance of wholes that have their place in others of a more comprehensive order we saw that this progress towards increasing inclusiveness can theoretically be continued to infinity. Now it will easily be seen that each of these successive systems will correspond to a grade or level in the hierarchical scheme. For the principle applies that we are concerned at each step with a whole that possesses a wider significance than the elements which it unifies. We need have no misgivings, therefore, in continuing our study of wholes in relation to the pyramidal figure.

The question arises, of course, as to how far such an image is to be regarded as being limited in conception through the fact that it is drawn from the realm of our physical experience. How can a notion which is derived from matter be really applicable to a sphere of being which appears to be of a different order? The importance of the point must be properly acknowledged. A symbol that is conceived within a condition of limitation may reasonably be expected to lose its validity to the degree that we move out of that condition. It will be obvious, for instance, that if on reaching a certain point in our ascent of Jacob's Ladder we find that the notion of a 'ladder' itself becomes transformed, or indeed may have to be abandoned, the image must be regarded as having only a limited application! And the same, of course, with the Platonic ladder which one draws up after one into a region where ladders cease to have significance.

Nevertheless, there is another aspect of the matter to be considered. For basic physical concepts such as those of height, depth and breadth can be thought of, not as being limits imposed upon our imagination, but as symbolical equivalents or representations of deeper spiritual realities. The fact, for instance, that such an illuminated mystic as Jacob Boehme makes free use of them can scarcely be taken to indicate that his mind was still conditioned by material impressions. For there is an important difference between being limited by physical experience on the plane of uninspired 'common sense', and apprehending it in what can be described as a

sublimated form. And in any case until it can be decisively shown that there are higher symbols accessible to us in this field of experience we shall have to accept the fact that in our attempts to grasp the nature of transcendental states of being this classical type of imagery is still the most effective that is available to us.

In all this I am leaving out of account the factors of distortion and chaos. For what they involve is a descent *below* the base line of the system. We are here discussing graded levels of order, so far as human beings are able to achieve it in contemplative or practical terms. What falls outside the scheme belongs to the inverted pyramid of the diabolical—so that at the extreme nadir we have to postulate a point of total extinction that has a metaphysical correspondence to the apex.

Now as to the planes of being (or consciousness) with which we become concerned as we move upwards towards the summit. What we meet with as we ascend are ever more comprehensive systems of relationships. And from this fact a number of important conclusions follow. In the first place, the conditions existing on any given plane will be only partly comprehensible to a mind that is attuned to that which lies below it. For principles will be entailed for which no explanation can be furnished. The relation will be that existing between, say, the understanding of a radio transmitter by an ignorant savage and that enjoyed by an expert in electrical theory. To the latter it presents no difficulties, since he has a grasp of the plan according to which it is designed. And the evident corollary is that in order to solve any problem which cannot be dealt with on the level on which it arises it must be considered in terms of relationships existing on that by which it is transcended.

For the more always throws light on the less inclusive. In respect of every difficulty that confronts us a wider range of (relevant) knowledge is an indisputable advantage. In the light of a more extended system of ideas the situation is seen in a more illuminating perspective, so that often what appear to be insuperable obstacles are quite easily surmounted. And one may say that the system is consummated in a condition in which by definition nothing of the nature of a problem can any longer present itself!

Again, since on each level the degree of intercommunication entailed is greater than on that which lies below it, an increased

amount of power will be available. The wider the affiliations enjoyed by any mind, the greater its capacity for dealing with its problems. Hence the advantages enjoyed in different fields by the rich, the well-connected, and the learned. The situation is symbolized by the condition of a vessel in distress on the high seas. This in earlier epochs meant extreme danger. But today with our immensely improved technical resources we are able to notify ships over a wide area of its predicament, so that they can hasten to its aid. And the help which they offer is itself rendered more efficient through our modern achievements in the realm of applied science. Here indeed is a case in which it can be said that 'knowledge is power'.

Finally, we cannot avoid the conclusion that it is only by reference to the apex of the system that the relations existing on all the levels beneath it can be fully clarified. For by definition it is at that point alone that there is achieved a total unification of all the elements of which the whole is composed. It works out, therefore, that our search for truth opens up for us ever wider perspectives as we ascend, so that at each stage we realize the limitations of the concepts with which we had formerly been working, while at the same time we perceive that the more comprehensive vision we are enjoying is itself destined to have its place in a still more inclusive revelation. Nor, we must surmise, will this expansion of consciousness ever be brought to an end.

So much for the general relation between the planes comprising the system. It will now be appropriate to give some examples of the actual way in which the different levels of experience are stratified.

The basic principle involved is that of subordination. What we may describe as arrangements in thought or matter can be considered in and for themselves, or from the point of view of the purposes to which they minister. In the first case we simply take note of the fact that an object has such-and-such characteristics, and do not pass beyond this constataion. In the second case we examine its function in relation to other objects with which it is associated. And this means that we become inescapably involved with a hierarchical structure, for the simple reason that we cannot avoid thinking of particular levels of manifestation and activity as being of superior importance to others. Of course in respect to certain

special issues it may be extremely difficult to establish the existence of such a series. But so far as the general features of our experience are concerned we are confronted with different kinds of gradation the reality of which it would be simply perverse to deny.

For example, we all recognize that we have to reckon with a series of phenomena extending from the inanimate upwards to an unknown limit. At one end of the scale we have material objects that are almost completely subject to any forces that are brought to bear upon them—such as a tennis ball in the course of a game. Moreover, they are in a state of maximum separation from one another. Although for all we know (as the philosopher A. N. Whitehead supposed) communication between them may be established on some rudimentary psychical level of which we have not direct knowledge, as far as the visible scene is concerned, what we observe is inertia, and complete indifference by each unit to the condition and situation of every other. Leave a collection of objects together in an attic, and provided that they remain undisturbed their relations with one another (so far as it is not affected by their disintegration) will remain unchanged.

Further, it is an interesting fact that to the degree that a human being becomes conditioned by matter he also tends towards this condition of isolation and fixation—so that we significantly enough describe him as a 'clod'. The more limited the mental activity, the more the individual concerned is conditioned by his immediate environment and thus localized in space and time. In other words, he tends to become little more than an extension of his body, and from being a person approximates increasingly to the condition of an object.

In dealing with this theme I am considering, of course, only formations as they exist on the macroscopic plane. We have earlier (p. 20) taken note of the fact that their static external character belies the intense activity which is taking place within them in the electronic field.

Now let us turn to the next level, that of the biological. It is plain that we are now concerned with organisms the activities of which become increasingly complex as we ascend, while at the same time the degree of freedom of choice permitted them becomes progressively greater. The effect, therefore, is a multiplication of mutual

relationships. The mere fact that animals are capable of moving about freely and investigating different types of situations ensures this fact. Interconnectedness is now a far more prominent feature of existence.

We then come to the plane of the human, on which the power of the mind to recognize and combine ideas surpasses immeasurably anything to be met with in the rest of the natural world, while enormous power over material forces is placed in man's hands as a result. And finally the human itself is transcended by something still higher—the divine, a condition which it is beyond our power to describe, yet the reality of which, if we are spiritually sensitive, we find ourselves bound to acknowledge. For no one can claim to be fully rational until he has reached the point of recognizing the existence of the Gods!

Again, it is natural and appropriate that we should grade our activities from the point of view of the superior purposes that they serve, and this at once involves us with a hierarchical series.

A simple example is provided by the building of a cathedral. On the basic level it is a question of dealing with problems in engineering of a type that present themselves equally in all constructional undertakings, whether it is a question of a garage, a school, a jail, or a railway station. But the material has to be treated not only from the utilitarian standpoint; for the aesthetic element also comes into play. We have seen earlier that this means that we are concerned with the balance between the elements out of which different kinds of wholes are composed, which means that the principles involved are of a different order from those controlling the behaviour of material bodies.

Now these principles, in their general aspect, are taught in schools of art all over the world. Yet by themselves they are of no great significance, since they only find their justification when they are applied by an individual artist, who makes use of them in order to express his ideas in this or that medium. With this, however, we become concerned with a still higher element in the hierarchical scale: that of personality. For we earlier took account of the fact that the systems created by human minds have a unique character, in that they are at the same time individual and yet universal in their significance.



But the individual artist is necessarily working within the field of some particular culture. And his creations have no great power unless they are impressed in one way or another with its character. When he achieves such mediation he is speaking, not only for himself, but for all those like him who share certain ideals and are moved by certain rhythms and forms. Of course he may in his work synthesize elements from different cultures, or even reveal a prophetic responsiveness to a culture that is destined to emerge only in the future. But the principle applies that he is exercising his function as a *spokesman*. He is expressing his individuality within the framework of a certain tradition, however restricted or specialized it may be.

We have still, however, not yet reached the end of the series. For cultural activities can be developed on many different planes. A creative thinker may be living within a social system from which the religious element in man's experience is systematically excluded. Or he may be working in one that provides for it, but be personally uninterested in religion and its problems. In either case he will make his contribution to the general welfare in some field like that of science, agriculture, art or education. If, however, it happens that he is sensitive to religious values, and his social environment is such that he can express himself with some freedom, he will be impelled to produce his works 'for the glory of God'. In other words, he will not attempt to separate the lower levels of our hierarchical experience from the higher.

It will be plain that this attitude of mind cannot find a more appropriate outlet than in participating in the building and adorning of a cathedral. For it represents the culmination of the series that we have been reviewing, so that a whole complex of forces, material, psychological and intellectual, are all as it were synthesized and sanctified by its dedication to an absolute Power. On every level, as we have seen, a type of activity is undertaken that could theoretically be carried out without reference to anything beyond itself. But as the project develops higher elements are introduced at each successive stage, until finally a value is triumphantly affirmed, and symbolized by the vertical thrust of its tower or spire, that is of a purely transcendental order. And the effect on the sensitive spectator is that all the sides of his nature are satisfied and integrated with one another.

A final comment. If the evaluation of experience in terms of hierarchical relations is justified, at least one important conclusion emerges. Science, even at its best, must be deemed to occupy a relatively low place in the structure of our experience. We have seen earlier (pp. 69-70) that although it has an immensely important function to perform in defining for us the character of that vast material system of things within which our human activities have to be developed, these activities in themselves pertain to a higher order of manifestation. The reason is plain. Science deals with phenomena most effectively just in so far as objects are considered as being conditioned by general laws which determine their character. But to the extent that we become concerned with beings in whom the capacity for origination is displayed we can only deal with their behaviour in terms of concepts of a higher order. Or to put it differently, to the degree that man progressively liberates himself from the laws that control matter, science becomes increasingly incapable of explaining his activities.

As for technology, it is sufficiently evident that it has an entirely subordinate function in relation to our human purposes. Its place is indisputably towards the inferior end of the scale, since the devices that it places at our disposal acquire significance only so far as they serve ends which can be discovered and pursued solely by raising the mind above the plane of purely scientific thought. In a word, technics has no sense except in relation to values, to the understanding or the vindication of which science, strictly conceived, can contribute nothing. Although all this may appear to be very unpromising, and will certainly offend the devotees of purely scientific research, I would venture to suggest that if the principles of hierarchical structure are properly respected it is difficult to avoid drawing these conclusions.

## *2. The Process of Ascension*

We must now consider briefly the typical changes in consciousness that take place as the individual ascends through these different levels of experience.

If first of all we examine the state of mind of the unawakened type of person we find that on the one hand he has only the most

partial understanding of his own subjective processes, and that on the other his conception of the external world in which he is living is of the most conventional type. He takes its existence for granted, and has no strong disposition either to alter its character or to discover what may lie behind the appearances that it presents. In other words, he is powerfully conditioned by his physical organism, both in respect of the direct effects on his mind of its processes (hunger, lust, gregariousness, pugnacity, etc.) and in respect of his response to the objects that he finds outside himself, which he regards as being both fully real, and altogether distinct from his own being.

And here we must note that one of the most insidious effects of our material environment upon us is to produce the illusion that the physical, three-dimensional realm is complete in itself. There seems to be a conspiracy on the part of Nature to invest the objects presented to our senses with a sort of pseudo-finality, hypnotizing us into the belief that we are living in a world that has no further dimensions. And to this influence the ordinary unreflective person succumbs almost completely. He is beguiled into feeling 'at home' in what is really only a simplified and selected aspect of a far wider world. Nor does the scientist escape this influence either.<sup>2</sup>

But of course the individual's attempt to exclude the deeper aspects of experience is only partially successful, and is paid for by constant subconscious anxiety regarding them. He is in the first place rendered uneasy by all cultural manifestations of a higher type, and still more so by anything suggesting the reality of non-physical forces. His attitude in the face of such challenges is invariably defensive and conservative; he clings obstinately to the familiar and the easily-comprehensible. All this is quite compatible with the possession of valuable and lovable human qualities; but I am considering here only the limitation of his consciousness in relation to the higher levels of the hierarchical system.

With respect to paranormal manifestations, if he responds to them at all he is likely to associate himself only with lower types of psychical manifestation which appeal strongly to the sensational nature. And as far as any philosophical understanding of such manifestations is concerned he is prone to regard them as 'miraculous' or 'supernatural', since he has no understanding of the principle of successive levels of organization.

If, now, we consider the next cultural level we find that the person concerned has at least emancipated himself from the biological to the extent that he is able to use his mind freely in studying and comparing different types of culture, and social and ethical problems. But this attitude, creative as it is in one aspect, is unfortunately compatible with a marked lack of responsiveness to spiritual realities—by which I mean in this connection those that belong to the superior levels of the pyramidal structure. Since, however, his mind is extremely active the result is that he makes every possible attempt to explain their character by a process of reduction—i.e., by interpreting them in terms of a lower plane than that to which they properly belong. This is, of course, the procedure followed by the cruder type of behaviourist or psycho-analyst; his fundamental concern is to bring everything down to a plane on which it can be dealt with in terms of materialistic and biological concepts. And since in developing his theories he may display considerable subtlety and ingenuity he can do a great deal in misleading and confusing those who lack his intellectual acuteness. Here I will remind the reader of a suggestion put forward in an earlier chapter (pp. 54-5) that it is fundamentally the emotional nature that links us with different realms of being, rationalization being a secondary process only. The failure in this case is one of the 'heart'.

As to the more highly cultivated person, besides showing himself capable of tolerance and comparatively wide sympathy, he is genuinely sensitive to the spiritual—in other words, to those manifestations in which the permanent and the impermanent aspects of being appear in a balanced relationship. His interest, however, is centred principally upon the disclosure of Spirit in the visible realm. That is to say, he is responsive primarily to 'values' so far as they find expression in philosophy, science and the arts. But he shows no marked disposition to turn deliberately *away* from the outer world in order to discover in the realm of the Within a surer foundation for understanding its nature and dealing with the problems with which it presents him. In other words, he is not prepared to follow the specifically religious path, which demands of the individual that he shall seek to unify himself inwardly with the supreme Source of his being by prayer, aspiration, self-abnegation and dedication. As far as his culture goes, he still remains essentially a *humanist*. And

in relation to the pyramidal figure we have to recognize that he has not yet become more than partially sensitive to the influences reaching him from its superior levels, on which the dependence of the soul upon the Divine is clearly evident to the soul.

One of the implications of this situation is that so far as he succeeds in integrating his psychological processes he does so in what may be termed the 'horizontal' mode. In other words he adjusts up to a certain point his adaptations to *this* world. But although this accommodation is essential for mental and emotional equilibrium, the fact remains that he is not yet concerning himself with a much more interior and creative form of synthesis which is achieved by perfecting one's responses to spiritual influences reaching one from interior realms of being. The difference involved is that between what may be termed adjustment and a deeper process of *regeneration*. But the significance of this distinction will be evident only to those for whom the path of mystical aspiration has already become a reality.

What, now, happens when the person concerned begins to realize the limitations of a purely humanistic culture? Here we meet with a very interesting situation. For we find ourselves obliged to allow for the existence of a plane of being, or consciousness, which is located (spiritually, but not mathematically) midway between the apex and the base of the figure. It may be defined as the level at which the downward 'pull' of matter is exactly balanced by the celestial power carrying man upwards towards a condition of spiritual freedom. Again, if we recur to the image of the Descending and Ascending Spirals at which we glanced earlier (p. 21), it is a condition in which the individual is acted upon by them both in an equal measure.

This median line I describe here as the Threshold (quite distinct, by the way, from the Threshold referred to in the literature of esotericism), and as may be expected the state of mind of the person who is engaged in traversing it is one of considerable indecision and anxiety. For he realizes that he is being called upon to choose decisively between the claims of the material and the spiritual. As a result he may hesitate at this stage in his development for a very long time before he commits himself decisively to the sacrificial, dedicated life.

In the course of time the person arrives at a point in his development at which the Threshold may be said to have been crossed. What now distinguishes his attitude from that which he adopted previously is that he now *co-operates consciously* with the regenerative powers at work within his own being. Or to put it differently, in his efforts to integrate his personality he is now taking due account of the 'vertical' as well as of the 'horizontal' aspect of synthesis. As a result the way is opened to a process of spiritual evolution in the course of which he gradually becomes emancipated from the mental and emotional inhibitions that limited him at the beginning of his journey.

It follows that from this point onwards the more orthodox type of psychologist can help him only very partially in solving his problems. For, expert as he is in dealing with those who are struggling with the ordinary difficulties of life, he has usually only a limited understanding of what is entailed when a person opens his souls to specifically spiritual influences. How, in fact, can he be expected to if the philosophy on which he is working makes no proper provision for the existence of transcendental states of being, and if, further, he has not himself practised any of the disciplines to which the aspirant is now dedicating himself?<sup>3</sup>

### 3. *Towards Emancipation*

I will conclude this chapter by giving a short account of the changes in consciousness that occur as the aspirant, having crossed the Threshold, follows the path that leads upwards towards emancipation.

First of all, it must be understood that he begins his pilgrimage in a state of what may be termed spiritual receptiveness. By this I mean that he has attained to the insight that although he is seriously conditioned both by living in a physical body as well as by the fact that the concepts which he is capable of grasping are of a very limited type, he has perceived clearly that he stands on the threshold of ever widening vistas, and that limitless possibilities lie before him in respect of the expansion of his consciousness. As will be seen, this means that he has escaped from that condition of mind, referred to earlier, in which the individual is subject to the illusion that the

physical world in which he is living is a complete system, pointing to nothing beyond itself.

But it is important to realize that this responsiveness to the notion of a hierarchical structure, the planes of which extend upwards to infinity, is the outcome of a definite interior quickening through subjective association with higher realms of existence. The basic element involved is essentially spiritual. The man has been acted upon from above, and has reached the realization that all life, love, order and power have their ultimate source in an Absolute, the nature of which discloses itself to us progressively as we follow the path of evolution upwards towards the apex of the scheme.

The nature of his situation in this respect may be brought out by comparing such experience of the transcendental with the merely *intellectual* recognition of the principle of hierarchy which is achieved by the purely scientific investigator. For while it is certainly true that an acknowledgment even of this order implies a certain response to the influence of Spirit, it clearly has not the same compulsive power for the individual as a realization that has been reached by personal striving and suffering. It may be described as proleptic, or preliminary in character.

The essential point is that even when the man of science recognizes the possibilities that are offered by grading experiences on successive levels, he follows the course of interpreting every one of them only by reference to that which lies immediately above it. That is to say, he applies the accepted scientific principle that until every effort has been made 'explain a given situation in terms of known factors, no attempt should be made to bring any further ones to bear upon it. In other words, so far as he accepts the principle of hierarchy it is only with reluctance; he only has recourse to extrapolation when all else has failed! Moreover, even the conception of extrapolation itself can be seen to involve the assumption that the lower levels of the structure are the basic realities, and that we extend from them, if compelled to do so, into a region of relative uncertainty and insubstantiality.

Significantly enough, the mystical thinker proceeds by a directly opposite technique. For he starts from an intuitive recognition of the fact that the apex of the system is the true reality, and then draws the important conclusion that direct concentration upon it cannot

but quicken the mind in dealing with the problems presented to it on each successive plane. Instead of proceeding from the known to the unknown he reverses the process and assumes that the terminal point of the series, with which it is possible to associate oneself in an interior and intuitive mode, is the most potent of all.

It must further be observed that when the approach to the Absolute is made in a healthy and balanced fashion certain elements are always present. To begin with, there is no morbid asceticism. The seeker after wisdom does not at any point in his pilgrimage lose sight of the fact that, as emphasized earlier in these pages (p. 26), the summit and the base are in a deep metaphysical sense one. Or to put it differently, each step, or level—as we saw in considering the principles involved in building a cathedral—rests firmly on that which lies below it. Hence for the illuminee there is a sense in which all planes of manifestation, so far as they are not conditioned by man's evil propensities, are of equal spiritual validity. It is a question only of greater fulness and freedom being disclosed to us as we ascend.

Again, if his approach is correct he will be preserved from indulging in purely intellectual speculations regarding the character of the higher levels of being. We have seen earlier that the mark of all truly spiritual manifestations is that within them the permanent and the impermanent, the general and the particular, are disclosed to us in balanced conjunction. The important implication is that it is unprofitable to concern oneself with conditions of existence that cannot in some sense be imaginatively *realized*. In other words, one should confine oneself to notions which can be grasped by an extension from the plane of understanding on which the mind is already focussed. While the reality of the Absolute can be perceived intuitively, as far as the growth of one's consciousness is concerned the safe path indicated is that of struggling with those conceptions that lie immediately beyond those that one has already mastered. But at the same time the religious thinker holds also firmly to the view that in this attempt to enlarge his understanding he can be powerfully helped by a constantly turning of the soul towards the Supreme, experienced emotionally as the sublime Source of all.

The next point is that at this stage in his pilgrimage the individual becomes firmly persuaded of the reality of invisible and potent spiritual forces that are acting upon him from higher *and objective*



realms of being. Of course his ideas regarding this relationship may be limited in all sorts of ways as the outcome of his past history and education. But he will firmly acknowledge the basic principle entailed, and thus no longer remain satisfied with psychological theories that interpret religious imagery too exclusively in subjective terms.<sup>3</sup> And he will be impelled to dedicate himself seriously to increasing his receptivity to the inflow of heavenly power into his soul. Further, since one of the basic elements in the notion of an Absolute is that it contains within itself both the personal and the non-personal aspects of the universe, he will feel increasingly sympathetic to the idea that man is interiorly in communion with a hierarchy of eternal spirits, or angels, through progressively closer association with whom the process of his regeneration is accomplished.

As a result there begins within his being that process of psychological integration, referred to above, which is of a far more inward and creative order than the 'horizontal' type of synthesis which results from perfecting one's relation to externals alone. It is now a question of the initiation of certain interior psychical activities which are determined primarily by his subjective association with beings in the Invisible who have themselves attained to the condition into which he is entering. What is entailed is spiritual transformation through participation in states of a higher order than one can realize by one's own unaided efforts. But here we become concerned with deeply esoteric issues which cannot be discussed at this point.

As to the changes that take place in his awareness as he ascends the Mountain, we have already considered earlier, in discussing the nature of intellectual-emotional synthesis, the characteristic modifications that are involved. To recapitulate briefly, as inner liberation progresses the person concerned realizes that the universal and the particular, the cosmic and the personal, the formal and the qualitative, the masculine and the feminine aspects of being are in essence one. And he also finds that the experiences that are now being accorded to him can be interpreted and organized effectively only by the use of poetic and mythological symbols through which the universal is apprehended in terms of the concrete. Further, he passes stage by stage from a condition of mind in which he thinks of the myriad objects of which the world is composed as existing in

independence of himself to one in which he is primarily conscious of them as being complementary to his inner being. More and more as this path is followed is separation overcome. It is seen, in fact, to be an illusion resulting from that bondage to sense impressions which is characteristic of the lower levels of the hierarchical system.

With respect to his own subjective condition, one may say that the most fundamental and satisfying experience which is accorded to him is a deepened sense of his own inner being. But paradoxically it derives from the fact that through a process of what may be described as interior enlargement he is conscious of participating in a realm of existence of a more extended order that vastly transcends that to which he is himself confined. The peace and stability that he experiences derive from subjective communion with spirits of greater attainment with which he is now coming into association, and ultimately of course from the Supreme Spirit which is the indwelling principle of all.

The increase of equilibrium that is entailed can be seen to follow naturally from the character of the pyramidal figure. For if we conceive of it as being divided by a perpendicular line descending from the apex to the base it will necessarily follow that the degree of possible departure from this mean will diminish as the summit is approached. There are other interesting implications, such as the fact that owing to the increased degree of transcendence of each level over that below it which is entailed as the ascent continues (a mathematical consequence of the structure of the system) the path becomes at once more difficult and more easy as one advances. Though the trials are increasingly severe as the aspirant draws nearer his goal, he is ever more completely identified with a transcendental state of being in relation to which they appear as insignificant. So the pilgrimage which began in obscurity, and perhaps even in desperation, is completed in a condition of spiritual triumph and exuberance—as is testified to by the record of all true mystics and saints.

Finally, it is essential to realize that the process of spiritual liberation of which I am here giving an account expresses itself naturally in the objective realm (by virtue of the inseparable relation, referred to above, between the summit and the base) in a powerful impulse to play one's own humble part in regenerating and transfiguring the

realms from which one has gained interior liberation. The illuminate becomes by necessity the server, the ministrant, the guide, or the protector to those who are still struggling with the problems that he has mastered—and mastered, of course, only because he has been himself the recipient of ministrations from a still higher plane.

Such activity implies a use of the mind and will in a mode that is widely different from that in which they are employed by those who have not yet crossed the Threshold. For the essential principle entailed (as we saw in discussing the mystical alternative to extrapolation) is that the consciousness should be centred *primarily* upon the invisible sources of spiritual power with which one has come into association, and only in a *secondary* sense upon the objective task one is seeking to accomplish. For thereby the impermanent is duly subjected to the permanent. In other words, the lesser is reverently and trustfully subordinated to the greater. Yet as realization deepens both the within and the without are experienced more fully as one.

One of the most important applications of this principle of subordination is in the field of what is sometimes described as transcendental science. Ideas are not only conceived of as eternal forms, but also as dynamic agencies with powerful potentialities for transforming the situations existing upon the different hierarchical levels, and which can be activated by appropriate mental concentrations. Such 'magical' operations are, in fact, actually accomplished by all those healers, seers and 'practical mystics' who are engaged in introducing spiritual influences into our corrupted world, whether or not they realize the character of the principles which they are applying.

## CHAPTER XIII

### VISION AND EXPRESSION

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#### 1. *The Deeper Synthesis*

IN THE LAST chapter we considered the significance of the Hierarchical Principle. And we found that at a certain stage in our symbolical ascent of the Pyramid we had to reckon with the fact that in the more interior regions of his being man is in subjective association with invisible spiritual powers on which he is far more dependent than he is usually disposed to believe.

There will be no need to emphasize the fact that if this hypothesis is accepted (although what for the unilluminated intelligence ranks as hypothesis is for the developed mystic a matter of living experience), that process of psychological integration with which we have been occupied in earlier chapters will need to be carried to a further stage. For the range of the insights and experiences that are being synthesized must now be extended to include those that pertain to this higher plane of consciousness. In other words, the seeker after wholeness will have to learn to make due provision in every situation with which he is confronted for the activity of more inward, potent and subtle forces than those of which he previously took account.

This new factor can most simply be described as the 'angelical'. And proper attention to it will lead naturally and inescapably to a vision of the way in which those processes which are recognized by the imaginative as being accomplished on what may be termed the cultural plane are determined by others of a deeper order to which the seers and mystics amongst us are particularly sensitive. In other words, our human experience becomes interiorized to a still greater degree.

The effect is not only an appreciation of overtones and rhythms which earlier made no impression on the mind, or awareness of new

dimensions of being of which we have ordinarily no realization. We also awaken to the possibility of increasing in a decisive fashion our power to act in the outer world. For as our knowledge of this realm of being gradually deepens we find it possible to co-ordinate such apprehensions ever more closely with the knowledge which we acquire in more external fields. As a result the nature of the situation with which we are concerned whenever we sincerely attempt to think and feel integrally is found to be more comprehensive than at first appeared—if only because we have to take account of the participating activity of unseen spiritual forces as well as those which we ourselves are seeking to control.

A single example will suffice to illustrate my point. On an earlier page (p. 164) I suggested that our difficulties with the recalcitrant behaviour of physical matter can be largely overcome if we learn to think of it as a medium for communication between human minds. If, now, we take the further step of recognizing that we are all the time in subjective association with discarnate minds which are impressing their ideas upon us without our (usually) realizing the fact, we shall clearly have to give our conception of the spiritualization of matter deeper implications. For it will now have to include the activity of invisible beings as well as our own.

Nor are we in respect of such issues concerned only with the enrichment of the picture that we have made for ourselves of the surrounding world. For we have in this matter to reckon also with the basic principle that our power to act with effect within it will be markedly enhanced if, while fully attending to what is before us, we are able to concentrate our minds deliberately upon interior and invisible reservoirs of wisdom and love. This deeper process of introversion may be described, in fact, as the interior aspect of psychological integration. The Unseen is conjoined with the seen as the outcome of a creative act of faith, and the power of the Spirit decisively manifested as a result.

## *2. Outworkings and Applications*

But it would be out of place to consider this theme further here. I must conclude my survey by giving a few brief indications of the way in which the principles set forth in this book could be

fruitfully applied in the fields of education and psychology.

In the first place it will be evident that much could be done by awakening intelligent people to the realization that, beyond that stage of integration to which we are aided by the psychotherapist, we can enter, through a deeper synthesis of the mental and the emotional elements in our nature, into a condition of spiritual liberation in which there is not only a clarification of vision on all levels, but also a greatly increased capacity for acting creatively in the outer world. And of course definite techniques (which cannot, however, be examined here) can be developed for bringing about this condition.

Secondly, if younger people especially were provided with a scheme of philosophy which made it unambiguously evident that correct thinking in all fields of experience implies always an equal regard for the permanent and the impermanent aspects of being and for both the intellectual and the emotional elements in our nature, they would be preserved from being disturbed and misled by all sorts of theories and practices of a one-sided order. For instance, they would find it much easier to perceive the disastrous consequences of repudiating man's deeper religious and metaphysical insights. And they would have little difficulty in recognizing the shortcomings of vitalistic and sensationalistic attitudes to life (such as that of that dynamic but confused prophet, D. H. Lawrence) which cut the individual off from the deeper sources of peace and power. While in the opposite direction they would be able to gain a proper understanding of the limited scope of scientific knowledge, and the serious effects on the mind of thinking too exclusively in terms of abstract categories in the fields of science, philosophy and sociology.

From what has been said already in the course of this exposition the liberating effects of organic thinking in the realm of one's personal life, and its significance for our experience of community, will be sufficiently apparent. And finally it must be emphasized that the basic principles of integrative philosophy can be applied with exact precision in every department of practical life, so that a person can be taught to sing, write, act, perfect himself in a craft, acquire scholastic knowledge, and adjust himself to difficult and unfamiliar conditions in a new and liberating fashion as the result of a correct

appreciation of the fact that the intelligible and the sensible are all the time making equal demands upon us, and that our experience is hierarchical in its structure.

But an exploration of these encouraging possibilities must depend upon how far the present pioneer essay serves to arouse interest in what its author believes to be an important and creative theme.





Chapter I

- 1 (p. 1) I use the term 'mystical' to denote a relationship with the Supreme Being, with any lesser being, or with any existing object, which is achieved by a process of direct, non-intellectualized identification.
- 2 (p. 2) But it is important here not to lose sight of the fact that it is our *emotional* states only that are reflected in the character of our bodily processes. No direct correspondence can be established between concepts and somatic conditions—although of course ideas can be conveyed to others by the use of speech and gesture. The higher the mental level, the less direct the connection with the body. See *I Who Am*, pp. 31-4.
- 3 (p. 2) 'Experience' is an unsatisfactory word, since it is not always clear whether it refers to an objective situation that has produced a psychological effect upon an individual, or to that effect itself. Thus by 'a person of experience' we mean someone who has made a wide number of contacts in the course of his life, and is not likely to be taken in easily by appearances. In other words, our attention is directed to what he has seen and done.

On the other hand when someone affirms that a performance of *Parsifal*, the spectacle of a volcanic eruption, or his reception into the Church was an 'experience' for him, he means that the event had primary significance for his inner life. The essence of the matter is that all encounters with externals have for us both an objective and a subjective reference, but that according to the context we lay weight either on one component or the other. From the point of view of philosophical presentation it is sufficient to note that both the external and the internal are always involved, in whichever field the accent may fall.

- 4 (p. 3) I am using the words 'emotion' and 'feeling' quite flexibly. In this realm we have to reckon first of all with what is termed 'negative emotion', by which is meant a morbid and inhibited condition which prevents the individual from responding freely and constructively to the influences reaching him from his surroundings. By 'emotion' generally we mean feeling that has an intense and agitated character, entailing an inability to focus the mind correctly upon what is immediately before one. 'Feeling' in its more creative aspect implies that the person concerned is deeply stirred by what he is contemplating, and experiencing a condition of inner release and enrichment as a result.
- 5 (p. 4) As an indication of the kind of thinking which could compensate for this deficiency I would instance an interesting article on 'Music as an Unconscious Force' by the musician Robert Donington which appeared in *Harvest 1* (issued in 1954 for private circulation by the Analytical Psychology Club, London). The thesis he puts forward is that what may be termed the structure of our musical experiences is determined in the most definite way by the physical rhythms underlying sound. 'The images of music', he writes, 'have an enduring physical foundation in our objective universe. Our impressions of consonance and dissonance, of sweetness and brilliance, and of the other basic contrasts of the musical art correspond directly to natural causes: the degree of beating among the sound-waves, the strength and distribution of the ringing background of upper harmonics' (p. 8). It will be obvious that the principle here applied could be fruitfully extended to many other fields, so that an advance could be made towards an interpretation of experience that rested as much upon the nature of the cosmic structure, both visible and invisible, as upon our knowledge of subjective psychological processes.
- 6 (p. 5) I would make it plain that the Absolute as conceived of in this work is not merely *static* in character. Nor is it to be regarded either, in the Hegelian tradition, as a principle that unifies the diverse aspects of existence in terms of reason alone. It must,

be thought of, rather, as That which lies behind both changelessness and change, thought and feeling, the masculine and the feminine modes of experience. Theologically, it could be defined as the Divine Reality, known to us in terms of the dual manifestation of Father-Mother. All these conceptions are, of course, seriously inadequate, but they are the best that we can achieve in the way of representing to ourselves on the mental plane the nature of an ultimate Mystery. Beyond this point one can advance only by following the more interior path of mystical contemplation.

- 7 (p. 10) I have not used the expression 'physical matter', as we have to allow for the possibility that matter exists in different states of refinement. But on whatever plane we are dealing with it we shall find that it provides the basis for qualitative phenomena as well as for the manifestation of individuality.
- 8 (p. 11) Suspicion regarding the use of this traditional term is allayed somewhat if one uses the now fashionable equivalent 'psyche' instead. I shall employ both expressions as seems appropriate. For the purpose of this particular exposition scientific precision is out of place, it is a question simply of using a convenient word to designate that human, partly self-aware entity which is the seat of our thoughts and feelings, much of whose behaviour is known to the individual directly, and which passes an uneasy existence poised between the physical and the transcendental realms of being, experiencing neither joy nor sorrow in an unqualified measure, and ceaselessly active in seeking to adjust itself to its environment.

## Chapter II

- 1 (p. 14) In the terminology of psychotherapy 'identification' indicates that morbid condition of mind in which the patient finds himself in *involuntary* rapport with another person or object, so that the manifestation of his own individuality is unhealthily suppressed as a result. Here, however, I shall use the term in a positive sense as meaning that creative projection of the self into the being of others which is also described as 'empathy'. What I am concerned to emphasize is the mystical significance of the process, since it entails the overcoming of that condition of egotistical separation from other forms of life in which we all most of the time find ourselves living.
- 2 (p. 15) 'Indeed we can regard "matter" as that which persists, and "form" as that which changes, for no form is eternal' (Lancelot Law Whyte, *Aspects of Form*, Lund Humphries, 1951, p. 2). The thesis advanced in the present essay is the exact reverse of this, since physical matter, at least, is regarded as being impermanent in character, while forms are conceived of as being eternal. But in this connection 'forms' (which are intellectual) must be carefully distinguished from 'formations', which are essentially transitory in nature. It is in part a question of terminology, as I suspect that Mr Whyte means by 'forms' what I mean by 'formations'.
- 3 (p. 16) It is important in considering this question to avoid the mistake of creating a false contrast between our ordinary common-sense knowledge of the external realm and a wider order of knowledge gained by the awakening of consciousness in the psychical sphere. Both Bergson and the late G. N. M. Tyrrell would seem to have missed this point through failing to make proper allowance for the fact that the world of the senses *when contemplated with the spiritual eye* provides us with a revelation of a far higher order than any which can be gained by the mere quickening of the psychical faculties in itself.
- 4 (p. 18) Of course radiations themselves are only known to scientists in phenomenal terms, since their activity is detected by inspecting the behaviour of pointers, etc. So what it comes to is that the kind of sense impressions that we receive when looking at pictures or listening to music are translated by the investigator into others of a simpler type which can be precisely described in terms of a system of scientific classification. But the element of indirectness remains.
- 5 (p. 23) See Chapter I, Note 7, above.
- 6 (p. 23) The conception of the universe as the manifestation of a Divine Mind which

- is ceaselessly active in creating ideas and projecting them into the phenomenal world of great philosophical significance. The theory has been worked out with exceptional thoroughness by a modern philosopher whose writings are still very far from enjoying the appreciation and respect that they deserve. I refer to Douglas Fawcett, whose three major works, *Divine Imagining* (1921), *The Zermatt Dialogues* (1931) and *The Oberland Dialogues* (1939) are worthy of the most serious study. In fact, one may go so far as to suggest that his doctrine of Imaginism may serve to provide a foundation for that renaissance of Spiritual Philosophy which is so urgently called for in the West—or at least prove to be a major contribution to such a development.
- 7 (p. 25) 'How blessed that things do not move with our thoughts. The glass on the table is still while I think, imagine, fear and love.' (Adrian Stokes, *Inside Out*, 1946, p. 39.)

## Chapter III

- 1 (p. 32) For a fuller account of the will see *I Who Am*, pp. 132-3 and 172-6.
- 2 (p. 35) In an interesting letter published in the *London Observer* of 16th January, 1955, Professor Arnold Toynbee stressed the fact that 'our heads use words in one way (the lawyer's, engineer's and scientist's way); our hearts use them in another way (the poet's and seer's way); and each usage can express an aspect of the truth that cannot be expressed by the other'. And he added, 'unfortunately, there is no clear or agreed distinction between them'. But although there can be no doubt that intelligent people are sensitive to the differences between these two approaches to reality, one must affirm that their apparent irreconcilability should be a challenge to reflective minds to discover how they can be synthesized.
- 3 (p. 35) The essential idea involved in the concept of intuition is 'seeing into', penetration below the visible surface. I therefore use it here to convey the idea that when a person is looking at something he perceives that the appearances that are presented to him on the plane of the senses constitute a medium through which he places himself in contact with that which lies behind them. The appearances as such do not convey to him this fact; but by a process of sympathetic identification he penetrates to the reality which they shadow forth.
- The term 'intuition' is also used to describe (1) the mental faculty of grasping in one immediate act of apprehension a system of ideas connecting phenomena the relations between which are not superficially apparent (see K. Lorentz in *Aspects of Form*, p. 195), and (2) direct insight into supraphysical realities, such as is manifested by seers and mystics. One should observe that in all the examples mentioned the principle is involved of passage through the phenomenal to a deeper level of being.
- 4 (p. 44) While the use of scientific terminology is perfectly applicable in dealing with the plane of the factual, its relevance decreases as we move away from it into the realm of values. As an example, a recent paper in a scientific journal on the Theory of Integrative Levels discusses in an able and interesting manner the relations existing between them—but in the cold and precise language appropriate only to the base of the structure. Since, however, for anyone with any sense of the organic the higher levels of any such system are naturally associated with such manifestations as radiance, love and beauty the effect produced by this purely intellectual presentation of the theme is one of incongruity; no allowance is made for the fact that as integration increases elements are introduced into the complex which cannot be described in scientific terms. The scientific way of looking at things has, in fact, at a certain point to be itself integrated with something more ultimate!
- 5 (p. 48) From the point of view of conveying the character of the organic element in our experience 'awareness' is perhaps a better word than 'consciousness', since it brings out the fact that the individual's subjective state is correlative with the existence of objects in an external world. To be 'aware' in the deeper sense of the term is to be at one and the same time both within oneself and within that which one is contemplating.

## Notes

- 6 (p. 51) The challenge to systematic philosophical thinking that is offered by poetic and mystical experience may be illustrated by the crisis which occurred in the development of Kant's thought. It appears (I quote from an interesting article on Heidegger and Kant published in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 13th November, 1953) that in the first version of his *Critique* he conceived of the 'productive imagination' as the common root of the sensibility and the understanding. In the second version, however, he abandoned this position, and has been criticized by Heidegger on this account. Now 'productive imagination' is undoubtedly what may be described as a suprarational concept. Professor Kemp Smith, for instance, has pointed out (I again quote from the article) that it 'is virtually regarded as an unknown supersensuous power, "concealed in the depths of the soul".' So naturally the professional philosopher will regard it with some apprehension. Yet it may well be the case that, however hard this may be on the philosophers, the deeper key to our experience of an outer world lies just in the activity of a mystical principle within the soul that it lies beyond the power of the analytical mind to comprehend.

### Chapter IV

- 1 (p. 59) See Chapter II, Note 6.  
 2 (p. 60) 'The Beauty of the Real . . . lies in the perfection of uniqueness which belongs to every thing, or thought, simply because it is. . . . The only name for the faculty by which we can discern that element of Beauty which is present in every Fact, which we must discern in every Fact before it becomes Truth for us, is Love. . . . When we love a Fact it becomes Truth; when we attain that detachment from our passions whereby it becomes possible for us to love all Facts, then we have reached our Peace. If a Truth cannot be loved, it is not Truth, but only Fact. But the Fact does not change in order that it may become Truth; it is we who change. All Fact is beautiful; it is we who have to regain our innocence to see its Beauty.'—John Middleton Murry, *Studies in Keats*, O.U.P., 1930, p. 81.  
 3 (p. 66) 'In the last analysis, the mind which encompasses the universe is more marvellous than the universe which encompasses the mind.'—Dr Raymond B. Fosdick.

### Chapter V

- 1 (p. 80) In his *Psychotic Art* (1950) Dr Francis Reitman has called attention to the fact (112, seq.) that pictorial artists think primarily in terms of 'situational conjunction'. In other words, they respond powerfully to a very important type of relationship which is of an entirely different order from that into which an object enters through being a member of an abstract class, and which discloses itself only in the form of what may be described as 'significant togetherness'. The same principle finds expression, of course, in all the arts.  
 2 (p. 80) 'The poetic conducts an immediate conceptual synthesis of percepts.'—Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction*, 1928.

### Chapter VI

- 1 (p. 88) Here appears a basic weakness in Bergson's conception of the spatializing and life-denying activity of the intellect. For he contrasts our vital experience of the changing with our notion of a spatial field within which all events are conceived of as taking place. The truth is, however, that what is actually experienced by us psychologically are constantly changing manifestations against a background of relatively stable and *particular* spatial formations (a man moving about a room, for example). If this fact is duly recognized the whole picture of our contact with the outer world appears in a widely different light.

## Notes

### Chapter VIII

- 1 (p. 110) The oriental theory is that the condition for relating oneself to the immediate occasion is the preservation of an interior identification with a transcendental state of Undifferentiated Being. If this is properly maintained all the problems that confront one in the external world will be perfectly resolved. The western view, on the contrary, is that proper adaptation is achieved by attunement, primarily to the Creator, and in a secondary sense to those liberated beings ('angels and archangels', 'the Elect', 'the Saints', etc.) who do His will. The Buddhist will claim that he is adhering to a pure doctrine which eliminates all sorts of fantastic creations with which the superstitious human mind has populated the invisible realms. The occidental spiritualist, on the contrary, will affirm that our destiny is worked out in terms of a very real and definite affiliation with hosts of other beings, incarnate and discarnate, and that what the Buddhist philosopher represents as a liberation from superfluous supraphysical complexities is really a simplification of the real issues, since every individual is called upon to develop his personality within a complex system of cosmic relationships with which he is obliged to come to terms.
- 2 (p. 112) 'How may a man attain to self-knowledge? By Contemplation? Certainly not; but by action. Try to do your duty and you will find what you are fit for. But what is your duty? The Demand of the Hour.'—Goethe.
- 3 (p. 118) I have gone into this question in Chapter XV of my *I Who Am*.

### Chapter IX

- 1 (p. 126) Not to be confused with 'the Intermediate State' in which, according to Indian tradition, a man immediately after death has various visions as a preparation for reincarnation. See *Buddhist Texts*, Ed. Edward Conze, Bruno Cassirer, 1954, p. 283.
- 2 (p. 127) See Chapter VIII, Note 1.
- 3 (p. 128) A cousin of the dog imagined by William James which would be able to recognize all the statues in the Vatican by smell alone.
- 4 (p. 134) 'A Platonic idea could never be the whole cause of its temporal expression; a material or feminine element is involved that may receive that influence and make it fruitful.'—George Santayana, *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*, Constable, 1927, p. 16.

### Chapter X

- 1 (p. 140) The late Dr Maurice Nicoll, in his fascinating essay, *Living Time* (Vincent Stuart, 1952), would seem to have been in danger of confusing these two elements. See p. 29.

### Chapter XI

- 1 (p. 158) See *I Who Am*, p. 123.

### Chapter XII

- 1 (p. 171) See Chapter I, Note 5.
- 2 (p. 179) For a masterly discussion of the effect of this innate tendency of the human mind in limiting the development of modern scientific thought see *Homo Faber* (Methuen, 1950) by the late G. N. M. Tyrrell. This important study has still, unfortunately, failed to receive the recognition that it deserves. For a simpler and more popular statement of his views on this question see his later work, *The Nature of Human Personality* (Allen & Unwin, 1954).
- 3 (p. 182) I have dealt with this theme in some detail in Chapters VII-IX of *I Who Am*.



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